

Self-Dedication,
Personal and Sacramental;
BRIEFLY
Explained and Enforced.

By WILLIAM HARRIS.



L O N D O N;

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THE PREFACE.



HERE is nothing more eminently the Interest of God in this lower World, or of greater Importance to its Welfare; than Practical Godliness, and Civil Liberty: the one asserts the Sovereignty of God over the Minds of Men; the other, over their Lives and Possessions; in opposition to Tyranny and Superstition. The prosperous State of both these is the greatest Glory to any Place, and would make the World happy. And

tho there is reason to be sensible of the great Detay of Them every where, yet we are not without reason to believe, They shall survive all Opposition, and rise to a greater Perfection. Who among us can make the fairest Pretence to an unalterable Regard to Both; have made it most their Business, and been most Successful, in all the variety of Appearance, and Revolution of Things, in serving and promoting them: I shall not here undertake to say, and think is obvious enough to impartial Observers. But certainly none can be more secure of the Protection of Heaven, or more worthy the Regards of Men, than the truest Friends of Both: And 'tis great pity an hearty Zeal for these two should not be a sufficient Bond of Union among good Men; or ever be parted from one another: That any sincerely good Man should not be in the Interest of Civil Liberty; or any who espouse the Cause of Liberty, not be sincerely Good.

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One great Means of promoting Practical Religion, has been the many excellent Practical Discourses by several different Hands; and scarce any thing among us is more Encouraging, or a better Symptom, than the great Variety and general Acceptance, of such Books of later Years; a Catalogue of which is drawn up in the Close. For these have the greatest Tendency to serve the best Purposes; to form the Minds of Men aright, in what most concerns them to know; to warm the Heart, and excite a suitable Concern; to regulate the Life in the various Circumstances of Things, and several Instances of proper Regards. And nothing carries so convincing Evidence of the Truth of Religion, as the Power of it in the Lives of Men; or contributes more to retrieve and advance its Honour in the World. This would be the best Security against dangerous Errors, and the most effectual Answer

to the Cavils of Libertines : and Men will ever talk in vain of the Reasonableness and Excellence of the Christian Religion, who live in Opposition or Neglect of its essential Principles and Rules. All the Speculations of sacred Truth are in order to Practice ; and Books of Controversy and regular Conceptions, are chiefly valuable upon this Account, as they have a directer Influence and greater Force upon the Heart and Life, and are helpful to settle the Judgment, and determine a suitable Regard. Otherwise less Light with greater Integrity, would better serve the Ends of Religion : Knowledg which puffs up and don't edify, will only condemn ; and clearer Light prepare the way for the blacker Darknesh. An upright Mind is as much preferable to the mere Skill of Thinking, as a good Conscience is better than a clear Head ; and a regular Course of Holiness, than the exactest Notions of Truth. The last Age, tho plainer, and

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and less polite, was more Remarkable for Zeal in Religion, and Simplicity of Manners.

The Subject of this short Discourse is wholly Practical, but of the greatest Importance. I apprehended it ought to be treated in a familiar Manner, and reduced to a narrow Compass; to be set before the Reader in a clear and easy Light, and a natural and agreeable way; without the Pomp of Eloquence, or Affectation of Art.

I know the first Part has been already twice touched, in a private, and in a popular Discourse, by the accurate Pen of the late excellent Mr. How. I should not have chose to have writ upon a Subject so near a-kin, after so Extraordinary a Person, whose great and clear Mind was above the common size; who reasoned upon the most Practical Points with the closest Connection, and greatest Strength; and to a vast Compass,
and

and noble Elevation of Thought, joined the most piercing Sense, and spiritual Savour of Things; and whose Works, with only greater Ease of Expression, I esteem the best Standard of judicious Writing in the Practical Way. The Reader will not wonder if some of his Thoughts, which I have often read with the greatest Delight, have sometimes returned upon my Mind, and mingled with my own; tho I have purposely avoided looking into him while I was drawing up these Papers, and concerned in this Subject.

I am sensible I have taken the Unfashionable side of the Question, in the Turn I have given the Subject. The Excellence and Authority of the Lord Jesus, runs low in the Accounts of many; but so does the Authority of the Scriptures too: and I shall never wonder to find them meet with a like Treatment, and share an equal Fate. I cannot understand why we should

The Preface.

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should not be determined by the Writings of the New Testament, which are of so much clearer Authority, and at least as plain in the Question, and easy to be understood; as the broken and uncertain Remains of the first Writers. I am persuaded, tho' natural Light could not lead Men to such Apprehensions of him, an impartial Reading of the New Testament, would; if Men were disposed to draw their Opinions from it, and bound their Enquiries with it; and did not bring their own Prejudices, and preconceived Opinion to it, or pretend to argue from the Nature of Things, which we don't understand, against their express Testimony. 'Tis highly reasonable to submit and acquiesce in Divine Revelation, in every Thing which wholly depends upon Revelation: And 'tis certainly of Consideration in the Case; That the Christian Church all along, the Greek and Latin, Popish and Reformed, and almost all the different Sects

The Preface.

Sects and Divisions of Each; have been led to conceive of him in such a Manner, notwithstanding their different Sentiments in so many other Things, with an almost unanimous Consent. I confess I have always thought the Practical Concern we have with Christ, and which equally affects every one, is more upon the Level to common Understandings, and a surer Rule by which to judg, than the mere Niceties of Criticism, or any Speculative Reasonings and abstracted Thoughts: and if this is not sufficient to direct us to right Apprehensions of him, I know not what is, and own I have no higher.

The Second Part was delivered to a Religious Society upon a special Occasion, and was the Reason of publishing Both. I shall only say of it; I heartily wish there were less need of such a Discourse, and that it may now meet with some answerable Success.

The Preface.

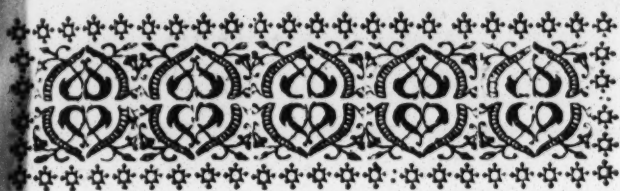
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If this serious Address to the Reason and Conscience of Men, shall prove effectual, by the Divine Blessing, to convince and excite the Mistaken and Secure; to revive the Sense of our Engagements to God; and promote the Benefit and Pleasure of Those to whom they were first directed: I shall esteem it a greater Mercy than any worldly Honour, and be content to leave to Others the Satisfaction of the freest Censure, or Neglect.

W. Harris.



Self-



O F

Self-Dedication.

2 COR. VIII. 5.

*And this they did, not as we hoped,
but first gave their own selves
to the Lord, and unto us by
the Will of God.*

THE Words as they lie
before us, are one of the
Characters of Commen-
dation of the Christian
Macedonians, whom the Apostle here
proposes as a Pattern to the *Corin-
thians*. *This they did not as we ho-
ped*, i. e. not only so; they exceed-
ed

Self-Dedication,

Ver. 2.

ed our Expectation in their Liberality to the poor Christians of *Judea*, considering the meanness and straits of their own Circumstances, *their great Trial of Affliction, and deep Poverty. But first gave themselves to the Lord*, i. e. not only gave their Goods and Possessions for the relief of the poor Christians, but devoted themselves to God, and to his Service. *And unto us by the Will of God*, i. e. either they committed the Care and Direction of their Contributions to the Apostles management and disposal; which he calls, *the Fellowship of the ministring to the Saints*: or it may possibly extend to their Church-Communion, and giving themselves up to the Apostles Direction, in the Ordinances and Worship of the Gospel. 'Tis reasonable to suppose they should give themselves to their Conduct in the Worship of God, as well as in the Disposal of their Charity. However 'tis certainly comprehended

Ver. 4.

prehended in the former; their *giving themselves to the Lord*, which must necessarily be supposed in every way of his Appointment.

Now concerning both these Senses of *giving* themselves; he says, they *first* did so, *i. e.* before they made their Contributions: their first and principal Care was a right disposal of *Themselves*. And that it was *by the Will of God*, *i. e.* by his Motion and Direction, or according to his Appointment and Pleasure. The Thing it self, and the Order of doing it was agreeable to the divine Will.

So that the thing the Apostle commends in the *Macedonians*, was their *giving themselves to the Lord*, or devoting themselves to him; and *to the Apostles*, as his Ministers and Servants, in the disposing their Charity, and presiding in the Christian Worship.

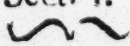
I shall consider the Words as a proper ground of Discourse concerning

Self-Dedication,

cerning *Self-Dedication*, or Covenanting with God; and that as it respects the *Lord* himself, and the *Ministers* of Christ; and so may fitly comprehend our *Personal* and *Sacramental* Dedication to him. And I shall propose *to open* and represent it to you, in both the Considerations of it; and to *press* it upon you, and plead the Obligations respective to each.

I begin with *Personal Dedication*; each one privately for himself. And here,

SECT. I.

Sect. I. I.  **T**O open and represent the Nature of it, it will be necessary to consider the *Lord* to whom we are to give our selves; and what the *giving* our selves to him imports.

§. I. Let us consider the *Lord* to whom we are to give our selves.

Personal and Sacramental.

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I understand the Lord Jesus Christ, Sect. I.
who is peculiarly known by that
Name in the New Testament, and
distinguished here from the *Father*,
who is called *God* in the latter part
of the Verse. Now this Lord may
be considered these two ways:

1. More *absolutely*, and as he is
in himself, and so is represented as
a *divine* Person; as the eternal Son Joh. i. 14,
of *God*, and *only-begotten of the Fa-* 18.
ther; an Expression peculiar to
Christ, and incompatible to a Crea-
ture. He is one with the Father,
of the same Nature and Authority;
I and the Father are one: which the Joh. x. 30.
Jews charged with Blasphemy; be-
cause thou being a Man makest thy Ver. 33.
self God. He possesses divine Per-
fections, and is adorned with the
Glories of the Deity. He was
from all *Eternity*, not only before
Abraham was, but before the *World* Heb. i. 10.
was made. By which Expressions Psalm. cii.
the Eternity of God is represented.

He is *immutable* and *unchangeable*:

B 3

He

- Sect. I.** He is the same, and his Tears shall not fail. He is the Lord God Omnipotent: Jesus Christ the faithful Witness, who cometh with the Clouds, and was pierced; is introduced, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, which is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty. He is every where present, where two or three are gathered together in his Name. He knows all Things, and searches the Reins and the Hearts. He has Life in himself, as the Father hath Life in himself. Can the Father give to any Creature so near a Resemblance of himself? And in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, i. e. whatsoever the Godhead contains and comprehends; or whatsoever is communicated unto us: so out of his Fulness we receive Grace, and are filled by him with all the communicable Fulness of God.

He is joined with the Father and Spirit in the most solemn Acts of
Wor-

Personal and Sacramental.

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Worship, and adored by all the Sect. 1.
heavenly Host. We are baptized ^{Mat. xxviii.}
in his Name; and from him all 19.
Spiritual Blessings come to us;
Grace and Peace from God our Fa- 1 Thes. i. 1.
ther, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
'Tis the most solemn and compre-
hensive Benediction of the Apo-
stles; The Grace of the Lord Jesus 2 Cor. xiii.
Christ, and the Love of God, and 14.
the Communion of the Holy Ghost,
be with you all. We find, all the Heb. i. 6.
Angels of God worship him: And
the Elders fall down before him, who Rev. iv. 10.
sitteth upon the Throne, and worship
him who liveth for ever and ever,
and cast their Crowns before the
Throne: which plainly refers to the
Lamb slain, Chap. v. 6, 12.

Upon these Accounts he is ex-
pressly said to be equal with God,
and the Image of the invisible God;
and the express Image of the Father's
Person, and the great God, and the
true God; and is every where re-
presented as the proper Object of
our

Sect. I. "our Homage and Regard: *That all*
 Joh. v. 23. *men should honour the Son, as they*
honour the Father. A dangerous
 Expression, and apt to mislead the
 Minds of Men, if the Distance be-
 tween them were so widely great,
 as that between a Creature, and
 the Creator! Besides, if we consi-
 der what Honour is every where
 required to be paid him; we shall
 find the highest instances of Ho-
 mage and Duty, which a reasonable
 Creature is capable of, or any
 where required to be paid to the
 Father; as supreme Love, and ab-
 solute Trust, proper Prayer, and
 universal Obedience. We must love
 Eph. vi. 24. *the Lord Jesus, not only in Sincere-*
 rity, with an unfeigned, and unmix-
 ed Love; but *more than Father or*
 Luke xiv. 26. *Mother, or Sister or Brother, or*
House and Lands, and our own Life;
 John xxi. 15. *and more than all other Things.* We
 trust him with our Souls, and for
 our Salvation, the greatest Con-
 cerns of either World. We not
 only

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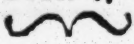
only pray to the Father *in his Name*, Sect. I.
but pray *to him* as the proper Ob-
ject of Worship, and Fountain of
Good: And *obey* and serve him ac-
cording to every Discovery of his
Will.

'Tis true, he is the *begotten of* John xiv.
the Father, and *sent of the Father*; 28.
and the *Father is greater than he*,
and the *Head of Christ is God*. The 1 Cor. xi.
Son of God derives from the Fa- 3-
ther, and is not properly *Self-exist-*
ing *. But then if it be allowed
a necessary Derivation, tho infi-
nitely free; as the Rays of Light
from the Sun; and not merely ar-
bitrary and at pleasure, which

* The Son is of the Father alone, not made,
nor created; but begotten. Athan. Creed.

I believe—in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only
begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father, before
all Worlds: God of God, Light of Light: Very
God, of very God; begotten not made; being of one
Substance with the Father. Nicene Creed.

So the Greek Interpreters speak of him: Διὸς
τὸ εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ὡς πατρὶς υἱός. Theod. Theoph.
ὡς ἡνικαὶ ὡς ἀγαπᾷ, καὶ ὁμοούσιον αὐτῷ. Oecum.

 Sect. 1. might never have been: 'tis sufficient to justify the great Things said of him, and secure all we intend; namely, that he is above the Level of the most exalted Creature. And 'tis only necessary to suppose a double Consideration of him, simply, as a divine Person, and as a Mediator, or mixed Person; to account for all the different Representations of him, and whatsoever imports Inferiority and Subjection to the Father.

2. *Relatively* to us. And so I find he is represented in the Scriptures, under the following Characters.

(1.) As the *Maker* of the World. This is particularly expressed, and in the strongest Terms. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was* Joh. 1. 1, 3. *God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made: not any one Thing, the meanest and minutest*
part

Personal and Sacramental.

11

part of the Creation. The Apo-
stle speaks distinctly: *For by him* Sect. I.
Col. i. 16.
*were all Things created, which are in
Heaven, and which are on Earth,
visible, and invisible; whether Thrones
or Dominions, or Principalities or
Powers; all Things were created by
him, and for him. And thou Lord* Heb. i. 10.
*hast laid the Foundation of the Earth,
and the Heavens are the work of thy
Hands. And in this Sense, prob-
ably the Apostle must be under-
stood, when he says; By Faith we* Chap. xi.
*understand that the Worlds were fra-³
med by the Word of God, i. e. the Per-
sonal Word of God; which renders
the Creation a proper Object of
Faith, and not of Reason.*

He raised this vast and beautiful
Frame of Heaven and Earth out of
Darkness and Confusion, and form-
ed the various Inhabitants of each
out of nothing: All the different
Kinds and Orders of Being, Angels
as well as Men, the meanest as well
as the highest, are the Creatures of
his

Señ. I. his Power. He made our Bodies
 of *the Dust of the Ground*, which
 are now *curiously wrought in the low-
 est parts of the Earth*; and breathed
 a living immortal Spirit, which en-
 livens and acts them. He gave us all
 the noble Powers of our Souls, by
 which we are distinguished from the
 inferior Creatures, and bear a near
 Resemblance to holy Angels, and
 the blessed God. We are his *Off-
 spring* and Workmanship.

Ps. cxxxix.
 15.

Upon this Consideration, he must
 necessarily be the *Owner* of the
 Creatures, and we his Property and
 Right. We are his *People*, and *the
 Sheep of his Pasture*; for *he hath
 made us, and not we our selves*. He
 has a Right founded in Nature, and
 superior to every other Claim, as
 well as prior to it.

(2.) As the *Saviour*, or Redeemer
 of the fallen World. We had ruin-
 ed the first Creation by our Apo-
 stacy and Revolt from God. By
 wilful Disobedience to the divine
 Law,

Personal and Sacramental.

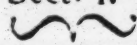
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Law, we not only lost the Image Sect. I.
of God, in which we were created, 
and forfeited the divine Favour;
but fell under the threatned Curse.

Now he is to be considered, as
the *Restorer* of the lost World He
is become a Mediator between
God and Man, in our Nature;
and by his Undertaking and Per-
formance as a *Sacrifice* for Sin, and
Advocate with the Father, has se-
cured the Reputation of the di-
vine Perfections, and his Govern-
ment over his Creatures; provided
for the Honour of the broken Law,
and injured Justice, the Guardian
of it; and render'd it every way
worthy of God, and honourable to
him, to shew Mercy to fallen Sin-
ners in the way prescribed in the
Gospel.

He has establish'd a *new Covenant*
in his Blood: the Method of di-
vine Dispensations towards the fal-
len Creature, which is called the
Law of Faith, in opposition to the Rom. iii.
Law ^{27.}

Sect. I.

 *Law of Works.* He freely offers saving Blessings to all humble and sincere Souls; and assures them of a gracious welcome, and kind regards upon their Return. We are justified by the Merit of his Blood, and renewed by the Power of the purchased Spirit: *He is set forth as a Propitiation thro Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins; and we are justified freely by his Grace, thro the Redemption which is in Jesus.* He has promised the *holy Spirit to them who ask it,* and gives it to all *who believe on him.* So he restores the divine Image, and recovers the divine Favour.

Rom. iii.
25.

Luke xi.
13.

John vii.
39.

Eph. i .6.
2 Cor. xii.
9.

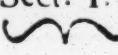
The whole Course of Divine Favours, and of the Creature's Regards, are preserved and secured by the gracious Administrations of the Redeemer. We are *accepted in the Beloved,* and assisted by *sufficient Grace,* in all we do. We obtain every Blessing from God, and find
 graci-

gracious Regards with him, in the Sect. I.
Merit of his Atonement, and the
Virtue of his Intercession.

So he is represented as the *Saviour of the World*; and *God our Saviour*, and the *great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. And we are in this respect to be considered as *ransomed by his Life*; *bought with a Price*; and redeemed by his *precious Blood*.

(3.) As a *Sovereign and Ruler*, who exercises a proper Dominion over the World he has made and redeemed. He has an unquestionable Right founded in Creation, and in the Purchase of his Blood, both to prescribe Laws, and dispose of us according to his Pleasure.

He is invested with sovereign Authority, and has an undoubted Right to govern us: For *all Power* Mat. xxviii.
is given to him in Heaven and in ^{18.}
Earth; and *he is Lord of all*. The Acts x. 36.
Will of Christ is the proper Measure of a Christian's Duty. Every
signifi-

Sect. I.  signification of his Will, which way soever he is pleased to discover it: all the Intimations in Nature and Providence; which may be gathered from the Works of God, or the Impressions of our Minds; but especially the Revelations of his Will in his Word; all the Precepts of Duty, and Institutions of Worship, are to be considered as Laws to the Creature, and binding to the Consciences of Men.

In this respect, he is *our Lord*
 Mat. xxiii. *and Master*; and *one is our Master,*
 10. *even Christ.* And we must learn
 of him, and follow him; and are the
 Disciples of Christ, and profess Sub-
 2 Cor. ix. *jection to the Gospel of Christ.*

13. And he has the Right of *Disposal*
 of the Conditions and Circumstances of Life. He *appoints the bounds of our Habitation,* and *chuses our Inheritance for us.* He allots us the proper Service of Life, and directs the Season and Measure of all our Enjoyments and Trials. This is

a natural Right, which every one Sect. I.
claims to what is his own; to dis-
pose and use it at pleasure.

In a word, his Authority is Supreme and Absolute, which takes place of every other, and is never to be disputed or opposed. It ought to satisfy under the crossdest Dispensations, to be able to say; *The Will of the Lord be done.* And Acts xxi.
it holds good in every Case of Com-^{14.}
petition; *We ought to obey God, rather than Men.* Ver. 29.

(4.) As the *Judg* of the World, and *Happiness* of the Creature. The Lord Jesus Christ is every where represented in the Quality of *Judg*; and that not only as one commissioned and appointed by God; but in virtue of his Lordship and Dominion over the World. *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath* Joh. v. 22.
committed all Judgment to the Son:
And has appointed a Day, in which Acts xviii.
he will judg the World, by the Man 31.
Christ Jesus, of which he hath given
assurance

Sect. I. *assurance to all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead. And the Apostle tells us expressly ; That we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ. And God will judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. He will determine the final State of Men, according to the Gospel-Rule ; and every one will receive a decisive Sentence from his Mouth. The ignorant, and unbelieving, and disobedient, will not stand in Judgment, but be condemned at the Redeemer's Bar ; all true Believers in him, obedient and persevering, will be acquitted and approved. The Wicked will go into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

2 Cor. v. 10.
Rom. ii. 16.
Mat. xxv. ult.

Indeed God himself, or the divine Nature, is most properly the ultimate End, or adequate and compleat Happiness of the reasonable Creature. He is *our exceeding great Reward, and the proper Portion*

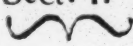
Personal and Sacramental.

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Portion of our Souls. 'Tis the great Sect. I.
comprehensive Blessing of the new
Covenant: *I will be to them a God*; Heb. viii.
i. e. an infinite and all-sufficient ^{10.}

Good, what no Creature is capable
of being. He only is suitable and
sufficient to all the purposes of our
final Happiness; of relieving our
Natures under every Burden and
Weakness, and filling up all our Ca-
pacities with suitable Good; of ma-
king us fully easy and everlastingly
blessed. And it must needs be so,
for he is an infinite and boundless
Good, who fills the enlarged Capa-
cities of Angels, and is sufficient
to make the whole Creation happy;
an immutable and eternal Good,
who continues for ever, without
any *shadow of Change*, when every
other Good will fade and perish.
He is infinitely full in himself, and
never lessened or diminished by the
largest Communications he makes.

Nevertheless the Lord Jesus
Christ is represented in the Scrip-
ture,

Sect. I.  ture, not only as the *way to the Father*, and the great Guide to eternal Life; but the final Happiness of true Believers is often described, in a real, tho partial, and inadequate Conception of it, by *being with him*. It was part of our Lord's so-

Joh. xvii. 24. lemn Prayer for them; *that they may be with me, where I am, and behold my Glory*. 'Tis their highest

1 Cor. v. 8. Ambition and Aim, when *absent from the Body*, to be *present with the Lord*: And the greatest Consolation under the Sorrows of Life, and Prospects of Death; That they

Luk. xxiii. 43. *shall be with him in Paradise*; and 1 Thes. iv. 18. *shall be for ever with the Lord*.

§. 2. Let us now consider the Nature and Quality of the *Act*, or what must be understood by *giving our selves to the Lord*.

We cannot be suppos'd to confer any new Right, or give him a proper Right which he had not before; but only to own a foregoing Right;

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Right; to *avow* him to be our Lord, Sect. I.
 and make a Surrender and Dedica-
 tion of our selves to him. This is
 otherwise exprest by coming under
the Bonds of the Covenant; joining Ezek. xx.
our selves to the Lord in a perpetual 37.
Covenant: Making a Covenant with Jer. l. 5.
him by Sacrifice. And in the New
 Testament, by *yielding our selves* Rom. vi.
to God, as those who are alive from 13.
the dead; and *presenting our selves* Chap. xii.
a living Sacrifice. 1.

It must be understood in the ge-
 neral, to imply suitable *Apprehen-*
sions of him in our Minds; that
 we conceive of him aright, and ac-
 cording to all the Representations
 of his glorious Excellence, and
 gracious Relation to us; that our
 Minds are possesst with great
 Thoughts of him, such as are pro-
 per to raise the highest Veneration,
 and engage the greatest Esteem;
 that we consider him as infinitely
 worthy, to whom we should give
 our selves; and infinitely gracious
 and

Se&t. I. and condescending, in accepting
 such an Offering at our hands.
 But more particularly, it may be
 conceived to lie in these four
 Things; respecting distinctly the
 several Considerations of him before
 mentioned, and wherein our special
 Concern with him lies.

I. *Acknowledgment* of his Right.
 We find upon due enquiry, that
 his Right is clear and full, and that
 no one else has any Right to us.
 We heartily own his Right, and
 avow this Lord to be our God; re-
 nouncing the Dominion of Sin and
 the Devil, and disowning all their
 Claims and Pretence. We look
 upon him as our proper *Owner*; and
 our selves, and all we have as his
 Property, who is the Maker of
 our Being, and Creator of all
 Things.

So that this must be understood
 to be the sense of one who gives

Isa. xxvi.
 13.

himself to the Lord: " *Other Lords*
have had Dominion over me, but

" *not*

Personal and Sacramental.

23

“ now will I make mention of thy Sect. I.
“ Name alone. I own no other
“ Right but thine, and look upon
“ all others as false Pretenders, and
“ Usurpers of thy Right. I now
“ disclaim from the bottom of my
“ Soul, every false Pretence, and
“ every foreign Yoke. I own thy
“ supreme and indisputable Right
“ to me, and all that is mine;
“ and cheerfully yield to thy just
“ Claim. Truly I am thy Servant, Psal. cxvi.
“ I am thy Servant, O Lord. The 16.
“ Lord whose I am, and whom I Acts xxvii.
“ serve. I can bring thee nothing 23.
“ but what is thine already, and
“ render thee only thy just due;
“ Of thy own, I make this Offering 1 Chron.
“ to thee. I dare not any longer xxix. 14.
“ alienate thy Right, or deny thee
“ what is thy own. Lo, I come to Jer. iii. 22.
“ thee, thou art the Lord my God;
“ who hast made me what I am,
“ and given me all my Powers.”
2. Compliance with his Methods
of Mercy. We submit to the way
of

Se&t. I. of Recovery in the Gospel, and which infinite Wisdom has contrived: that is, we are brought to an hearty Approbation and Consent to the Terms of God's gracious Covenant; to trust in the Atonement and Propitiation of his Blood, as the only Satisfaction to the offended God, and Refuge of guilty Souls.

Rom. x. 3. *Not establishing a Righteousness of our own, but submitting our selves to the Righteousness of God; and de-*

Phil. iii. 9. *siring to be found in him, not having our own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith. We submit to the powerful Influences of his holy Spirit, in the ways of his Appointment; admitting and suffering his renewing Work upon our Souls; yielding to his Operations without Resistance, readily complying without grieving him, and cherishing his holy Motions, instead of quenching them.*

So that this is the Sense of a self-^{Señt. I.}

resigning Soul: " I thankfully own
 " thy Mercy, and heartily approve
 " the Method of it; as wise and
 " well chosen, best suited to the
 " Case, and adapted to reach its
 " End. I am brought to be wil-
 " ling to renounce all other De-
 " pendence whatsoever, as satis-
 " factory and meritorious, to have
 " no *Confidence in the Flesh*, and ^{Phil. iii. 3.}
 " trust only to free Mercy in the
 " Redeemer's Blood: I cheerfully
 " submit to the saving Operations
 " of thy Spirit, and resign to his
 " Influence and Conduct, to be in
 " all things *led by the Spirit*, and to ^{Gal. v. 15,}
 " *walk in the Spirit*. Thou hast ^{18.}
 " settled and proposed the way of
 " my Acceptance in the Covenant
 " of the Gospel, and I heartily ap-
 " prove and comply with it."

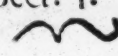
3. *Subjection* to his governing Au-
 thority. We give up our selves to
 his Direction and Disposal as our pro-
 per Lord: that is, we come under

C

the

Sect. I. the Obligation of his Laws, and
 2 Cor. ix. a professed Subjection to the Gospel
 13. of Christ: Casting down Imagina-
 Chap. x. 5. tions, and every high Thought which
 exalteth it self against the Knowledge
 of God, and bringing into Captivity
 every Thought to the Obedience
 of Christ; following the Direction
 and trusting the Security of his
 faithful Word in every Article
 of Duty, and gracious Declaration
 of his Will. We resign to the Disposal
 of this great Lord, and submit
 to his wise and holy Pleasure, in
 all his dealings with us. We are con-
 tent that we and ours should be
 in his Direction, and not at our own
 will, what he sees fit, whether it seem
 so to us or no; and that *not of our*
Will, but his Will be done with us.
 We are content to take up our Cross
 as well as deny our selves, and for
 his sake all and follow him.

So that the Sense of such a Sovereignty
 is to this purpose: "I own the Sovereignty
 of thy Will, and I will
 " therefore

"thority of thy Law; the just sect. I.
 "Obligation of every Dictate of 
 "Nature, and every Precept of thy
 "Word. I take my self obliged
 "in Loyalty and Duty to my
 "rightful Lord; to have respect to ps. cxix. 6.
 "all thy Commands, and walk in all Luke i. 6.
 "the Ordinances and Commandments
 "of the Lord blameless. I dare
 "trust thy Word for any future
 "and invisible Good, and lay the
 "stress of my Faith and Hope of
 "the greatest Blessings, upon this
 "single Security: Thou art the
 "faithful High Priest and Witness.
 "I freely resign to thy Disposal in
 "all Things, and am willing to be
 "what thou seeest fit, to serve thee
 "in any State of Life, or Circum-
 "stance of Things. Do thou
 "chuse my Inheritance for me, and
 "order my Lot and Portion as
 "thou plearest."

4. *Chusing* and resting in him as
 our Happiness. We stand the A-
 ward of his Tribunal, and receive

Sect. I. the final Sentence, as well as the
 ~~~~~ Law, from his Mouth. *The Lord*

Isa. xxxiii. *is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our*  
 22. *Judg; we come to him, tho not*

*single and alone, as the great Ob-  
 ject of our final Happiness, and on-  
 ly Center and Rest of Souls. We  
 commit our selves to him, as our  
 faithful Guide in the mean time*

Heb. ii. 10. *who will bring the many Sons to*  
*Glory, thro all the difficulties in the*

2 Tim. iv. *way; deliver us from every evil*  
 18. *Work, and preserve us to his heavenly*

Jude ult. *Kingdom: And is able to keep us*  
*from falling, and present us fault-  
 less before the Presence of his Glory*  
*with exceeding Joy.*

This then is the Language of a  
 Self-devoting Soul: "I dare not

"stand at the Creator's Bar, and

"cannot hope to be acquitted

"there, or upon Terms of rig-  
 "orous Justice. Enter not into

Psal. cxliii. *Judgment with thy Servant.*  
 2. *thou Lord wert strict to mark In-*

"quity, O Lord, who could stand

"But

" But this is my Hope and Trust, Sect. I.  
 " that I shall stand at the Re-  
 " deemer's Bar, and be tried upon  
 " Terms of Gospel-Mercy. *I know* <sup>1 Cor. iv.</sup>  
 " *that he who judgeth me is the Lord:* <sup>4.</sup>  
 " And that I must appear before the  
 " Judgment-Seat of Christ. He  
 " will judg the Secrets of Men, ac- <sup>Rom. ii.</sup>  
 " cording to the Gospel, and I shall <sup>16.</sup>  
 " be judged by the Law of Li- <sup>Jam. ii. 12.</sup>  
 " berty. Grant that I may obtain <sup>2 Tim. i.</sup>  
 " Mercy of the Lord at that day; <sup>18.</sup>  
 " and may be found in him at last, <sup>Phil. iii. 9.</sup>  
 " or a true Believer in him; That  
 " when he shall appear I may have <sup>1 John ii.</sup>  
 " Confidence, and not be ashamed be- <sup>28.</sup>  
 " fore him at his coming: That I  
 " may be pronounced faithful, and <sup>Mat. xxv.</sup>  
 " enter into the Joy of my Lord." <sup>21.</sup>  
 " The Lord is my Portion, saith  
 " my Soul. Nothing is suitable to  
 " my Nature, or sufficient for my  
 " Happiness, but the infinite and  
 " all-sufficient Good. Thou art  
 " the Center of Rest and Delight,  
 " all my Desires and Hopes unite in

- Sect. I. " thee: Here will I fix and look  
 " no farther; I will cease the vain  
 " pursuit of Happiness in the Crea-  
 " ture, when every one of them  
 " must say, 'tis not in me. I re-  
 " treat from the fruitless Attempt,  
 " and retire to my God; *Return*  
 " *unto thy Rest, O my Soul.* This is  
 " the deep and inward sense of my  
 Psal. lxxiii. " Heart; *Whom have I in Heaven*  
 25. " *but thee? and there is none on*  
 " *Earth I desire besides thee.* Yea,  
 Phil. iii. 8. " *doubtless, and I count all things*  
 " *Things but Loss, for the Excellence*  
 " *of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus*  
 " *my Lord, for whom I have suffer'd*  
 " *the Loss of all Things, and do*  
 " *count them but Dung, that I may*  
 " *win Christ.* I am content to let  
 " all go for thy sake, and embrace  
 " and cleave to thee alone. My  
 " highest Desire and Ambition is  
 2 Cor. v. 9. " that I *may be accepted of him, and*  
 " *whether living or dying, I may be*  
 " *the Lord's;* and when I depart,  
 Phil. i. 23. " *may be with Christ, which is far*  
 " *better.*

*Personal and Sacramental.*

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"better, than any present Enjoy- Sect. I.  
ment whatsoever."

"I trust my Soul in thy graci-  
ous and powerful Hands, and  
commit the Conduct of my self  
to thee, to carry me thro all the  
dangers in the way, and bring  
me safe to Heaven at last. Lord John vi.  
to whom shall I go? thou hast the 68.  
words of eternal Life. And I  
am persuaded that what I have 2 Tim. i.  
committed unto thee, thou art 12.  
able also to keep unto that day. I  
desire to resign my departing  
Spirit to thee, and to say with  
my latest Breath: Lord now lettest Luk. ii. 29.  
thou thy Servant depart in Peace;  
and Lord Jesus receive my Spirit; Act. vii. 59.  
Even so come Lord Jesus, come Rev. xxii.  
quickly." 20.

I shall now briefly consider the  
Quality of the Act, or the Proper-  
ties which distinguish it. There  
are four which are most material  
and comprehensive, and which de-  
scribe the Temper and Disposition



Sect. I. of Mind fuitable to such a Trans-  
 action.

(1.) It must be with *Understand-*  
*ing* and Judgment. Rash and sud-  
 den Purposes are seldom right, and  
 often easily broke, especially in  
 Exercises of Difficulty, or Times of  
 Trial. We must well consider  
 what we are going about, and  
 take in a distinct view of the whole  
 Case; what are the Engagements  
 we come under, and what the Du-  
 ties to which we are obliged. We

Luk. xiv.  
 28.

must *sit down first and count the Cost*  
 of being a Disciple of Christ, and  
 be well apprized of all the possible  
 Inconvenience which may happen.  
 We must weigh the whole matter,  
 and judg upon the best Evidence of  
 Things: "I form this positive  
 " Judgment of the Case, and come  
 " to this Determination of Mind,  
 " upon the clearest Conviction,  
 " and as the Result of my best and  
 " maturest Thoughts. I judg this  
 " to be highly fit, and my indif-  
 " pensible

“ sensible Duty, to give my self <sup>sect. 1.</sup>

“ to the Lord. I am sensible I

“ cannot dispose of my self better,

“ that I ought not to delay any

“ longer, or be content to be any

“ other's.”

(2.) With Freedom and *Choice*.

The depraved Will may go against

the Dictates of the Understanding,

and incline and lead another way.

The Understanding may direct to

God as the highest Good, and the

Will notwithstanding incline to Sin

as a more proper and suitable Good.

This often creates Conflicts and

Struggles in the unregenerate Mind;

*The Law of the Members warring a- Rom. vii.*

*gainst the Law of the Mind.* But <sup>23.</sup>

the Will in a renewed Heart, and

in all its regular Actings, is under

the Influence and Direction of the

enlightened Understanding. Ac-

cording to the fixed Apprehensions

of the Mind, will be the Motions

of the Will; and he who judges it

fit and right to be the Lord's, will

Se<sup>ct</sup>. I. accordingly give himself to him; and must needs do that willingly which he does with Judgment. The Understanding is the Eye of the Mind, and guides the Motions of the whole Soul; *If the Eye be single, the whole Body is full of Light.* The sanctified Will don't oppose the Dictates of the enlightened Understanding, but executes what it directs: 'Tis restored to its proper Empire in the Soul, and delivered from the *Bondage of Corruption*, the Conduct of Error and Slavery of Lust, false Delusion, and wrong Biass; and all the inferior Powers will be ordinarily under its Command, and in proportion to the Degree of its Sanctification.

So that a sincere Soul gives itself to the Lord with free Consent of Will, as well as full Conviction of Understanding. He is made

*Psalm cx. 3. willing in the day of his Power, and*  
*Luk. x. 42. chooses the good part which shall never*  
*Psalm cxix. be taken from him. " I have cho*

“ *sen the Way of Truth*, and am Sect. I.

“ freely Thine without Necessity  
 “ and Constraint, or prevailing  
 “ Backwardness and Reluctance of  
 “ Soul; not frightened with Fear,  
 “ or awed by Shame, from the  
 “ mere Power of early Impressi-  
 “ ons, or lower Considerations.  
 “ ’Tis the most free unforced  
 “ Choice, what I am governed in  
 “ by the clearest Light, and fullest  
 “ Satisfaction. I feel no Con-  
 “ straint but that of Love, no o-  
 “ ther Force but that of Truth. I  
 “ am overcome with the Weight  
 “ of Evidence, and yield to the  
 “ powerful Conviction of my  
 “ Mind”.

(3.) It must be *entire* and full.

If it were a partial Surrender,  
 in some certain respects only, but  
 exclusive of some other; it would  
 be *dealing deceitfully with the Lord*,  
 and a solemn Hypocrisy. But as  
 we have peculiarly to do, in this  
 great Transaction, with him who  
*searcheth*

Sect. I. *searcheth the Reins and Heart*;  
 Rev. ii. 23. so it especially concerns us to act  
 with Clearneſs and the ſtricteſt  
 Sincerity. We muſt give our ſelves  
 to him in his own way, with  
 an *absolute Unreſerve*, and without  
 Exception or Diſlike of any thing  
 he requires: "Let me be thine at  
 " any Rate, and upon thine own  
 " Terms: Uſe me as thou pleaſeſt,  
 " imploy me in any purpoſe of thy  
 " Glory; diſpoſe of me in any  
 " manner thou ſeeſt fit. I reſuſe  
 " not any Submiſſion thou re-  
 " quireſt. I decline not any Ser-  
 Pfal. cxix. " vice to which thou calleſt. I  
 128. " *eſteem all thy Precepts concerning*  
 " *all things to be right, and hate*  
 1 John v. " *every false way: And none of thy*  
 3. " *Commandments are grievous.*"  
 Acts viii. And they believe with all the  
 37. Heart; with the Concurrence of  
 the whole Soul, and without any  
 ſecret Guile, or ſingle Reſerve.  
 They dare not withhold any thing  
 from him which they can call their  
 own;



Personal and Sacramental.

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own; but give themselves up en- Sect. I.  
tirely to him, *Body, Soul and Spirit*,  
to be possess'd and imployed as the  
Habitation of God, and Instru-  
ments of his Glory. *I will keep thy* Psal. cxix.  
*Precepts with my whole Heart.* Yield<sup>69.</sup>  
*your selves to God as those who are* Rom. vi.  
*alive from the Dead, and your Mem-*<sup>13.</sup>  
*bers as Instruments of Righteousness*  
*unto God.* " Whatsoever I am and  
" possess is thine: All the Facul-  
" ties and Powers of my Nature;  
" every Enjoyment and Relation  
" of Life; whatsoever Advantage  
" and Opportunity thou affordest;  
" all I have is too little, and the  
" best, unworthy thy Regard:  
" Such as I am, I am entirely  
" Thine; I heartily wish I were  
" better for thy sake. If I had  
" the Capacity of an Angel, or the  
" Innocence of Adam; if I were  
" equal in every Grace to those  
" who most excelled in each; from  
" the Faith of Abraham, to the  
" Zeal of Paul: I should think it  
" an

Sect. I. “ an unequal Offering to so glorious a Person, and would make  
 “ an absolute Surrender of my self  
 “ to thee.”

(4.) Fixed and *Perpetual*. It must not be fickle and unsteady, like a sudden Passion of Mind, or a good Mood, which quickly cools and gradually wears off: Nor limited and confined to a certain Period or Date of Time; so that we should be understood to say, Thus far I will be the Lord's, but no farther: I will be his so long, or to such a time; and then be at liberty again: I will not be staked down, without the Power of changing my Mind, or altering my Course. It must not be hovering and undetermined like the *Ballance* of a Clock, which is never fixed, and indifferent to either Side.

It must be an *absolute* Determination of Mind, without wavering or uncertainty; coming to full Point and fixed Purpose, to be the Lord's

unchangeably and for ever; to Sect. I.  
stand good to the end of our Days,   
and never to be revoked. *I have* Psal. cxix.  
*inclined my Heart to perform thy Sta-<sup>112</sup>*  
*tutes, always even to the End.* They  
*join themselves to the Lord in a per-*  
*petual Covenant never to be forgot-*  
*ten:* Which nothing shall ever wear  
off the Sense of, or dissolve the Ob-  
ligation. They *cleave unto the Lord* Act. xi. 23.  
*with purpose of Heart*; which not  
only determines the Mind, but is  
a sure and constant Hold upon it  
too: "Whatsoever difficulty I meet  
" with in the way, whatsoever In-  
" convenience may possibly arise,  
" from the Change of Circumstance  
" or Trials of Life; I henceforth  
" quit all Right to my self, and  
" give up all to thee. I desire to  
" hold every thing under thee, and  
" with thy Pleasure and Leave. By  
" thy Grace I will never change  
" Masters, or renounce and for-  
" sake my Lord. This, I am sure,  
" is the settled Sense and Purpose of  
" my

Sect. I. “ my Soul ; and I trust in Christ,  
 “ to whom I give my self, I shall  
 “ always live, and die with it at  
 “ last.”

I shall only further observe ;  
 That this *Self-Dedication* may be  
 considered either as more *Occasional*,  
 in the private workings of a Man's  
 own Soul, and upon particular E-  
 mergencies of Things. And so it  
 should be often done, tho in a  
 more free and less accurate way ;  
 as in a time of Affliction and Dan-  
 ger ; after any signal Deliverance  
 and Mercy ; upon any great Under-  
 taking of Life ; under present Dark-  
 ness and Temptation ; or any so-  
 lemn Approach to God. An occa-  
 sional Solitude, or a serious Frame  
 of Mind is a proper Opportunity  
 for such a Purpose. There is an  
 implicit Surrender to the Lord in  
 our daily Devotions, when we seek  
 his Presence with us, and commit  
 our selves to his Care. Yea, we  
 may give our selves to him in pri-  
 vate

vate Ejaculations, and the silent Sect. I.  
Workings of the Heart, in the  
midst of Company, and the ordi-  
nary Business of Life.

Or else 'tis more Set and *Solemn* :  
in more direct Form, and an expli-  
cit Manner. And so it ought at  
least to be once done, in some so-  
lemn Retirement, and of set Pur-  
pose. Retire a while from the  
World; enter into thy Closet;  
prostrate thy self before the Lord;  
and offer thy self to him in some  
such manner as this:

“ I am an apostate Creature,  
“ who have revolted from God,  
“ and forfeited my Happiness;  
“ made my self vile by Sin, and  
“ miserable by thy Displeasure. I  
“ have long alienated my self from  
“ thee my proper Lord and only  
“ Happiness; and submitted to a  
“ foreign Yoke; to the Service of  
“ Sin, and of the Devil. But I  
“ now return to thee as my proper  
“ Owner, and freely acknowledg  
“ thy



Sect. I.

“ thy supreme Right : I heartily  
 “ comply with the Methods of thy  
 “ Mercy ; depending on the Merit  
 “ of thy Blood, and yielding to  
 “ thy Spirit’s Operations : I come  
 “ under Subjection to thy Autho-  
 “ rity ; to be govern’d by thy  
 “ Word, and disposed of at thy  
 “ Pleasure : I take thee for my  
 “ Happiness, and rest in thee as  
 “ my Portion ; hoping to *be with*  
 “ *thee*, and to *behold thy Glory*. I  
 “ do this from the deepest Con-  
 “ viction of Mind, with the freest  
 “ Consent of Soul, with absolute  
 “ Entireness and Unreserve ; and  
 “ with a fixed and unalterable Pur-  
 “ pose of Soul. I offer my self a  
 “ *living Sacrifice*, with all my Pow-  
 “ ers and Enjoyments, in my or-  
 “ dinary and prevailing Habit and  
 “ Course, unwilling Failures, and  
 “ sincere Repentance allowed : Let  
 “ me find a gracious Acceptance  
 “ with thee, as I desire unfeign-  
 “ edly to be the Lord’s.”

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

II. **I** Proceed now to *press* this Self-Dedication to the Lord, and plead the matter with you; and I shall argue and urge it upon you by the following general Considerations.

§. I. From the *Nature* of the Duty it self. 'Tis not a rigorous or an arbitrary Thing, but highly Reasonable, and absolutely Necessary.

Is it not highly Reasonable in it self, and the most fit and equitable Thing in all the World? The Apostle beseeches the *Roman* Christians to *present themselves a living Sacri-* Rom. xii. *fice*, from this Consideration, that <sup>1.</sup> 'tis their *reasonable Service*. Let us consider a little to this purpose the Terms in which 'tis represented. *Who* are we to give our selves to? Is he not a glorious and *excellent* Lord; infinitely worthy of all we can

Sect. II.

can offer him, and graciously con-  
 descending to accept an Offering at  
 our hand? Has he not numerous  
 Hosts of glorious Angels in a State  
 of Subjection; always bowing be-  
 fore him, and waiting to do his  
 Will? And is it not a Privilege and  
 Honour to present our selves in such  
 Company to the same common  
 Lord? Is he not a *gracious* Lord  
 the Saviour and Portion, the Cen-  
 ter of Rest and Element of Souls  
 in whose Image consists the Glory  
 of our Nature, and in whose Pre-  
 sence and Love our Happiness and  
 Joy? And whither shall we go,  
 but unto him? Can we make a  
 better disposal of our selves, or give  
 them to any other more excellent  
 and worthy, or more proper and  
 suitable to us, than he? And *what*  
 is it we are to give him? Is it any  
 thing but *our selves*? And is that  
 so great a matter to be denied him?  
 For tho that import *our all*, yet how  
 mean and little is that? Are we

not

not inconsiderable in our Make, Sect. II.  
and vile by Sin; below his Notice,  
and unworthy his Regard? Not  
glorious Angels, but dying Worms;  
not innocent Creatures, but apo-  
state Rebels, guilty and polluted  
Sinners. And are we not the work  
of his Hands, and what he chal-  
lenges as his own by the highest  
Right? And should we think much  
to give our selves to him, who are  
so despicably mean and unworthy,  
and so much his own already? Can  
we scruple or decline so low an  
Offering, and so every way equal  
and just? What is it we are re-  
quired to *do* with our selves? Is  
it any thing more than *to give* our  
selves to him? And is that any  
hard or difficult Thing? Does it  
carry in it any thing frightful or dis-  
couraging? He does not require  
any thing harsh and severe, much  
less barbarous and cruel, like many  
of the Rites among the Heathen  
Nati-

Se<sup>ct</sup>. II. Nations; as the sacrificing  
 ~~~~~  
 Lev. xviii. 21. Lives in Flames, and passing thro
 1 Kings xviii. 28. the Fire, like the Worshippers of
 Moloch*; or the cutting and slashi
 ing our living Flesh, like the Priest

* Moloch was a hollow Image made of Bra
 to the honour of the Sun, with an Oxe's Face
 and Hands stretched out ready to receive any thing
 offered. It was made red-hot with Fire, and an
 Infant put into the burning Arms by the care of
 Priest. The dying Srieiks were drowned with the
 noise of Drums, which gave rise to the Name
 Tophet, which signifies a Drum, and was the place
 of Execution. By this bloody Rite they were
 taught to expect the Health of their other Child
 dren, and secure the Welfare of their Family.

That passing thro the Fire, does not signify,
 some Modern Jews pretend, passing thro it unharmed
 or mere Purification and Dedication to such a
 Deity; but proper Sacrificing, and consuming in
 Fire; appears from the Prophet, Ezek. 16. 20, 21.
 Thou hast sacrificed them to be devoured. And
 Thou hast slain my Children, and delivered them
 to cause them to pass thro the Fire for their
 And the Psalmist seems to allude to it, Ps. 106. 38.
 They sacrificed their Sons and Daughters to
 vils. Vid. Selden De Dis Syris Syntag. 1. Cap. 6.
 Witsii Miscell. Lib. 2. Dis. 5. & Junii
 Histoire Critique.

and Worshippers of Baal †: he on- Sect. II.
ly requires that we give our selves
to him; that is, that we hearti-
ly consent to be his, and resign
our selves to him; that we should
own

† Baal was a Phenician Deity, as Moloch was
of the Ammonites. One signifies Master, as the
other does a King: both were worshipped in honour
of the Sun. Among other Rites of the Worship
of this Deity, they cut themselves with Knives
and Lancets, and covered themselves with their
own Blood. And tho this was particularly ob-
served in Mourning for the Dead, and therefore
forbid under the Law, Deut. 14. 1. Ye shall
not cut your selves for the Dead; and alluded
to by the Prophet, Jer. 19. 6. Men shall not la-
ment for them, nor cut themselves, nor make
themselves bald for them: Yet it appears, that
these cruel Rites were designed in honour to the
Deity, and to render themselves acceptable by their
Blood. And probably it was not proper to the
Priests, but common to all the Worshippers of Baal;
at least upon great and extraordinary Occasions,
when they designed to move Compassion, or obtain
any signal Favour. Some conjecture, that Baal is
the same with Zeus, and Jupiter or Jovi, (which
they derive from Jehovah) among the Greeks and
Romans. Vid. Seld. De Dis Syris Syntag. 2.
Chap. 1. Jurieu Histoire Critique.

That

Sect. II. own his Right to whom we really
 belong, and give our selves to him
 who is most worthy of us; that we
 should be under his direction, and
 at his dispose, who is the kindest
 Lord, and whom we may securely
 trust. And can any thing be more
 reasonable and easy? What can we
 do less, or he require short of
 this?

Besides, 'tis absolutely *Necessary*
 as well as infinitely Reasonable

That the same Rites were in use among the Romans in their Sacrifices to Beliona the Goddess of War; appears from Seneca, in Medea. Act 4. Scen. 2.

Tibi nudato
 Pectore Mænas sacro feriam
 Brachia cultro
 Manet noster sanguis ad aras.

Tertullian's Testimony concerning this Custom is remarkable: Infantes penes Africam Saturni immolabantur palam usq; ad Proconsulatum Tertullianus, qui ipsos Sacerdotes eisdem arboribus tempore sui obumbraticibus scelerum, votivis crucibus expiavit. Sed & nunc in occulto perseveratur hoc scelus facinus. Tertul. Apol. Cap. 8.

And

Personal and Sacramental.

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And these two Considerations, *Sect. II.*

wherever they meet together, give the greatest weight to any matter in all the World. 'Tis not an *Indifferent* thing which may safely be neglected and let alone; or a *Small* and inconsiderable thing, without any great Inconvenience. But 'tis *absolutely* necessary by the Constitution of the Gospel, to the highest Purposes of divine Mercy, and every saving Blessing; what was never dispensed with in any Man's Case, nor ever can be. Hence we find it often made a distinguishing Character of good Men; *Gather Psal. l. 5.*
together my Saints, they who have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice. 'Tis prophesied of returning Sinners; That they shall *ask the Jer. l. 5.*
way to Sion with their Faces thitherward: saying, Come, let us join our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, never to be forgotten. And the Apostle is very express; *Rom. vi.*
Know ye not to whom ye yield your

D

selves ^{16.}

Sect. II. *selves Servants to obey, his Servants*
 ye are whom ye obey, whether of Sin
 unto Death, or of Righteousness un-
 to Life? This is the grand Cha-
 racteristick, or mark of Distinction,
 which separates and divides the
 whole World, and plainly shews
 whose you are, and to whom you
 belong. Every sincere Believer in
 Christ gives up himself to him; and
 there never was such a one in all the
 World, who never did so: *i. e.* A
 true Christian who never heartily
 consented to be the Lord's, or
 made a personal Surrender to him.

§. 2. I argue from the *Obligations* we lie under to him. There
 are several strong Obligations meet
 together. For Example:

There is the Obligation of an
antecedent Right. You are truly
 his, and belong to him, whether
 you own his Right or not. For
 his Right is founded in Nature, and
 is antecedent to any Act of ours, or
 any

Personal and Sacramental.

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any one for us ; and wholly inde- Sect. II.
pendent upon it. You are the
Creatures of his Power, who sprung
out of nothing, and rose up into
Being at his Command. You are
his, and not your own, whether
you will or no ; and belong to
him, and to no one else : as Rebels
are, notwithstanding, the Subjects
of a rightful Prince. And he has
a Right founded in the *Purchase* of
his Blood, as well as the natural
Right of a Creator : For he *gave* Mat. xx.
his Life a Ransom for us. And we are 28.
so many ransomed Slaves : He has
redeemed us by his precious Blood from 1 Pet. i.
the Bondage of our spiritual Ene- 19.
mies. He has *purchased the Church* Act. xx. 28.
with his own Blood ; and we are a
purchased Possession, a special Pro- Eph. i. 14.
curement, and an appropriate and
peculiar People to himself. Yea, he
died, and rose and revived, that he Rom. xiv.
might be the Lord of the Dead and 9.
Living. He has acquired a new
and further Right, by the Merit of

Sect. II. his Death; and demands you as his own, in the Right of the Purchase he has made. He is to be confi-

2 Pet. ii. 1. dered as the *Lord who bought us*;

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. and we, as *not our own, for we are bought with a Price*. And should

you not readily own so clear and strong a Right? Can you deny so high and just a Claim? Would it not be the most manifest Injustice, and the highest Injury and Wrong?

Besides, There is the Obligation of our *Baptismal Covenant*. You have been solemnly *set apart* for himself, and dedicated to his Service. We were *baptized in the*

Act. xix. 5. *Name of the Lord Jesus*. The proper *Christian Baptism*, here distinguished from the Baptism of *John*, which was only preparatory and introductive to the Christian Dispensation, and a kind of temporary middle State; is by the Authority and Appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the Form and Commission given by him

Personal and Sacramental.

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him. So we are baptized into *Sect. II.*
Christ; distinguished from others by *Gal. iii. 27.*
this peculiar Badg of Discipleship;
which is of another Kind and Con-
sideration from that of the *Fathers*, *1 Cor. x. 2.*
who were under the Cloud, and pas-
sed thro the Sea, and were baptized
unto Moses in the Cloud, and in
the Sea: Which is plainly Figura-
tive and Metaphorical, and not a
proper Baptism; a mere allusive
Expresssion, and not at all parallel
to being baptized into Christ. And
it was plainly typical of Christ
too, as appears by *ver. 4.* *They*
drank of that spiritual Rock which
followed them, and that Rock was
Christ *.

His Right was solemnly owned
either by your *own* Act in your

* God by the Covering of the Cloud, took them
under his Wings and Protection; and they passing
thro the Red-Sea, the Waters inclosing them round
about, did profess to trust in God, &c. Patrick's
Aqua Genitalis, 418.

Sect. II. adult State; or by the Act of *others*
 for you in your Infant State. You
 have in reality been already given
 up to him, and are not now at li-
 berty whose to be, or to make ano-
 ther Choice. So the question now
 is; Will you stand to your Baptism,
 or will you revoke it? Will you be
 faithful to so sacred an Engagement,
 or false and deceitful? We have
 virtually done this already, and
 are obliged to do it in our own Per-
 son. For we were given up to him
 by our Parents, and brought under
 the *Bonds of the Covenant*, that we
 might stand to it our selves, and
 make it our own Act and Deed,
 when we come to be capable of it.
 And can any doubt whether we
 ought to be as good as our Word,
 and stand to the most solemn En-
 gagement? 'Tis a strange Absurdity
 for a *baptized* Person, or one so-
 lemnly devoted to the Lord, ne-
 ver to give himself up to him:
 Yea, 'tis a virtual and implicit re-
 nouncing

Personal and Sacramental.

55

nouncing our Baptism, and refusing Sect. II.
the direct Design and great Obligation of it. ~~~~~

Again, There is the Obligation of innumerable *Mercies*. He has not dealt with us as a Stranger or an Enemy, with Distance and Displeasure; but with the Kindness of a Father, and the Favour of a Friend. Let us consider our selves as his *Creatures* and *Care*, who has plac'd us in such a Rank of Beings, and given us such noble Powers; bestowed the common *Mercies* of Life upon us, and *supplied all our* Phil. iv. 19.
needs out of his Riches in Glory by Christ Jesus. An unbroken Series of Mercy has followed us all our days, and we have lived the Charge of an indulgent Providence; received constant Supports, and Comforts of Life; many seasonable Appearances, and distinguishing Expressions of Goodness. Have we not every one of us, had Experience in the course of Life,

Seet. II. of some or other memorable Deliverance and Favour? Perhaps we owe our Lives to a narrow Escape from a threatening Danger, and *Deliverance from so great a Death*: Or have received some eminent Mercy beyond all our Hopes, and against our Fears, by an invisible Hand, or extraordinary appearance of Providence. Yea, have we not lived all our days under the clear Light of the Gospel, and rich Enjoyment of the means of Grace, and had peculiar Privileges and Advantages above former Ages of the Church, and other parts of the World?

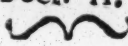
Rom. xii.

1.

And should we not be *beseeked by the Mercies of the Lord, to present our selves a living Sacrifice*? Should not the Charms of Goodness allure, and the Force of Love prevail? Where should we sacrifice but at his Altar, who is the *God of our Lives* and our Mercies? Whose should we be but his, who gave us all we have? Can there be

be any reasonable Doubt, or Com-
petition in the Case? So that the
Question here is, whether we shall
be *Grateful*, yea or no, to our best
Friend; or incur the guilt of the
most hateful Crime in the blackest
instance of it, that is *Ingratitude*,
and Abuse of Mercy.

Finally, You are obliged by
your own *Profession*. This is the
Language and Import of a credible
Profession before the World, of
your daily Appearance in solemn
Assemblies, and regular Attendance
upon outward Means; that you are
the Lord's, and own a Subjection
to him. Now either you are *heartily*
willing to be the Lord's, or you
are not. If you are not, why do
you make a Profession of being so;
why do you *lye to the Holy Ghost*, Acts v. 3.
and dissemble with God and Man?
We read not only of the *Lying*, Rev. ii. 9.
but the *Blasphemy of them who say*
they are Jews, and are not. Why
don't you presently renounce your


 Sect. II. Profession, and throw it up, and deal frankly and clearly with the World? But if indeed you are willing; why don't you actually do it? Immediately give your selves to him, and do what you profess to be willing to do. The Question here plainly is; Shall we be *Sincere* or *Hypocrites*? Act according to our *professed Subjection*, or not? Dare any Man openly avow Treachery and Deceit? Would you not esteem it an Injury and Reproach to be thought not willing to be the Lord's, or sincere in the Profession you make? And can you refuse to give your selves to him, without the grossest Inconsistency with your selves, and contradicting the Profession you make?

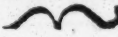
§. 3. Let us consider the Weakness and Insufficiency of every *Pretext* to the contrary. This will appear by a little Reasoning together about the matter. Why don't

you give your selves to the Lord? *sect. II.*
Is it not a plain and indisputable
thing among serious Christians of
all Parties, and who differ in other
Points? What hinders you from
doing it; what can you plead in
your own Excuse?

Will you say; That you are al-
ready *disposed* of, and engaged to
other Lords? If you were now
free, and at liberty whose to be,
or were now to make your Choice;
perhaps you might give your selves
to him, and be willing to be the
Lord's: But you are engaged in ano-
ther Interest, and held fast under the
Dominion of other Lords, by long
Custom, and powerful Habits of
Sin.—But whose are you when you
are not the Lord's? What are those
Lords who have the Dominion
over you? Have they any just
Claim or proper Right? Is it not
a *usurped* Power they exercise over
you, and a plain *Invasion* of ano-
ther's Right? Yea, are they not

Enc-

Sect. II. *Enemies*, who do you an unspeak-
 ~~~~~ able Hurt, and intend your eternal  
 Rom. vi. Ruin? Is not the *end* and *wages* of  
 21, 23. *Sin, Death*; and our *Adversary* the  
 1 Pet. v. 8. *Devil a roaring Lion, seeking whom*  
*he may devour*? And had you ra-  
 1 Cor. vii. ther be the *Captives of Satan*, than  
 22. the Lord's *Freemen*? The *Slaves* of  
*Sin*, than the *Subjects* of *Christ*?  
 Had you rather be wrongfully de-  
 tained by a foreign Power, than  
 give up your selves to your right-  
 ful Lord; and resign your selves  
 to the Power of a mortal Enemy,  
 than trust your best Friend? Will  
 you hug your own Chains, and  
 embrace and *love Death*? Should  
 you not immediately *wrest* your  
 selves out off their hands, and  
 throw off the galling Yoke? Should  
 you not breathe after Liberty, and  
 long for Deliverance? Where is  
 the Sense of Honour, or true Am-  
 bition of Mind, to be content with  
 Slavery, and sit down tamely un-  
 der the vilest Oppression?

Or else will you pretend, That Sect. II.  
 you have been already given up to   
*Him*, and what need is there of doing it again? You have been devoted to him in your early Years, and stand related and engaged by your Baptism; and what need of doing that your selves, which has been done for you by others; or doing that afresh which was once done with so much Solemnity long ago? —But should not this rather oblige you to give your selves to him? For was it not with this Design, that you were offered up to him by your Parents, that you might after give up your selves to him, and to oblige you to do it in your own Person? Baptism is only a Security during your *Minority* and Infant-State. The Obligation of your Parents ceases, when you become capable of acting for your selves, and comes with a direct Force and full Weight upon your selves. Besides, either they did well or ill, who



Sect. II. who offered you up to God in Baptism. If they did ill; why do you plead their Authority, or lay any weight upon what they did for you? Why is this made an Excuse? But if they did well; why don't you own their Act, and take it upon your self? Should you be always Christians by another's Christianity only, and not by your own Consent? Ought it not in reason to be your own Act, as soon as you are capable of making it so?

Further, will you say; This may be done some *other time* as well; there is no need of haste, or doing it just now? You intend to give your selves to the Lord, some time or other, but are now indisposed, or less fit by the Hurries of Business, and various Engagements of Life, &c. But if this be a matter which *must* be done some time or other; is it not fit it should be done immediately? That which must be done, cannot be done too soon;  
the

the sooner, always the better, be- Sect. II.  
cause the hazard of delay is pre-  
vented, and all the benefit of it se-  
cured. Besides, how can you tell  
you shall do it hereafter, if you  
neglect to do it now? This may  
possibly be the only season for it.  
The Calls and Encouragements of  
divine Mercy are always for the  
present: *Now is the accepted Time*, <sup>2 Cor. vi.</sup>  
*now is the Day of Salvation*; *To-day*<sup>2</sup>.  
*if you will hear his Voice, harden* <sup>Heb. iv. 7.</sup>  
*not your Heart.* The day of Life  
may expire sooner than you ex-  
pect; or the Influences of divine  
Grace be wholly withdrawn, by  
longer neglect: and either way it  
becomes impossible, and the only  
opportunity lost. However, to be  
sure this is the fittest time, and  
none so proper as the present. It  
can never be done with so much  
Safety or so great Advantage, if  
you delay it longer; and there  
never will be a more *convenient Sea-*  
*son.* And is it not more reasonable  
to

~ Sect. II. to do it now, than run the risk of never doing it at all; or at least of doing it under many Circumstances of Damage and Disadvantage?

Or will you pretend on the other extreme; that you know not whether he will *accept* you, and it be not now *too late*? If indeed you had something more valuable and worthy to offer him, you might possibly hope to find Acceptance; but you are sinful and vile, in the highest Instances, and under the blackest Aggravations. Or if you had given your selves to the Lord before, and made an Offering of your early Youth and manly Vigour, perhaps you might have found Regard: but you have long neglected and refused, or been un-found and unstedfast in his Covenant; and question whether it will not be now in vain. Will he accept so mean an Offering, and so late a Votary, if I should now re-

turn

turn to him?—But is not the di- Sect. II.  
vine Mercy infinitely great, vari-  
ous as our Wants, and wide as all  
our Desires; capable of higher Dis-  
plays of it self, than ever were yet  
made, and never in any Instance  
exerted to the utmost? Has *He*  
made Exceptions of particular Cas-  
es, or excluded any who are wil-  
ling to be his; and does it become  
us to do it? Would it not be e-  
qually unjust to him, and unkind  
to our selves, to narrow and con-  
fine his rich and boundless Grace?

Yea, don't he condescend to  
humble *Entreaties*, and gracious  
Assurances of Regard? Does not  
divine *Wisdom lift up her Voice*, and Prov. i. 20.  
*cry to the Children of men*, not only viii. Begin.  
to the Simple, but to the Scorners  
*who long delight in Scorning*? Did  
he not speak in the greatest Con-  
course of the People; *If any Man* Joh. vii. 37.  
*thirst, let him come unto me and*  
*drink*? And left it as a standing  
Encouragement to the World;  
*Come*

Sect. II. Come to me all ye who labour and  
 Mat. xi. are heavy-laden, and I will give you  
 28. Rest. And him who cometh unto me.

Joh. vi. 37. I will in no wise cast out. And again.

Rev. xxii. The Spirit and the Bride say come,  
 17. and let him who heareth say come,

and let him who is athirst come, and  
 whosoever will, let him come, and  
 take of the Waters of Life freely.

What strains of kindness do such  
 Expressions breathe, what stoop of  
 Condescension do they represent?

And has he not *always* accepted  
 them who sincerely offered them-  
 selves to him? Did he ever reject a  
 humble Soul, and will he now be-  
 gin? Or be more unkind to you  
 than all the World besides? Have  
 you not the same Encouragements  
 and Grounds of Hope, which all  
 they have had, who went before  
 you, and found acceptance with  
 him?

Upon the whole; if you don't  
 give your selves to the Lord, you  
 act altogether *unaccountably*, and  
 with-



without any reasonable pretence; *Se&t. II.*  
and will be found inexcusable and  
without Apology at last. Every  
guilty Refuser of the Gospel-Call  
will be struck *Speechless*, and re- *Mat. xxii.*  
duced to a defenceless Silence. *12.*

§. 4. I argue from the respective  
*Consequences* and Issues both ways;  
upon your giving your selves to  
him, or not doing it. Let us suppose  
then on the one side, that you *do*  
give your selves to the Lord; and  
how well were it if this could be  
supposed of every one! how happy  
would be the Consequence! For  
Example,  
You would be brought into a  
*Special Relation* to him, and a state  
of Friendship and Favour. If you  
give your selves to him, he will  
become yours, and will give him-  
self to you. You will then be able  
to say with the Church; *This God* *Psal. xlviii.*  
*is our own God:* and with the *14.*  
Spouse; *This is my Beloved, and this* *Cant. v. 16.*  
*is*

Sect. II. *is my Friend, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem: and with Thomas; My Lord*

Joh. xx.

28.

*and my God.* He will own the nearest Relation, and bear dearest Affection and Good-will. You

Joh. xv.

15.

will be the *Friends* of Christ, and he will not *be ashamed* to call you

Heb. ii. 11. *Brethren.* All the former distance

will immediately cease, and he will be yours in a Covenant-Relation and peculiar Manner; in the Exercise of all his glorious Perfections and Communication of his Grace. He will manifest special Love, and converse with a familiar Freedom. He will admit you to peculiar Intimacy, and allow an holy Boldness with him; all the Endearment of Kindness, and Confidence of Friendship. And how great a Favour is that in him, and honourable a Relation to us?

Besides, you will be *interested* in all the Blessings of the Covenant. When we make a Surrender of ourselves to the Lord, we have the

very

every moment an actual Right to Sect. II.  
 My Love Covenant-Mercies, and all the pe-  
 culiar Blessings of so high and near  
 Relation. View the Covenant  
 bound; take a full and distinct ac-  
 count of all the *exceeding great and*  
*precious Promises* in which it con-  
 sists, or the invaluable Blessings it  
 contains; and upon this Supposi-  
 tion they all become yours: For  
*all the Promises of God are Yea, and* 2 Cor. i.  
*Amen in him. And all are yours,* 20.  
*For ye are Christ's.* 1 Cor. iii.  
 Immediately upon your giving 22.  
 your selves to him, you are actually  
 justified, and discharged from Con-  
 demnation: For the *Righteousness* Rom. iii.  
*of God which is by Faith of Jesus* 22.  
*Christ, is unto all, and upon all who*  
*believe; for there is no difference.*  
 You are adopted into the Family of  
 God, and invested in all the Pri-  
 vileges of Sons: For *ye are all the* Gal. iii. 26.  
*Children of God, by Faith in Christ*  
*Jesus.* You receive the Gift of the  
 Spirit, the great Mark of Sonship,  
 and

Seet. II. and highest Pledg of Covenant-Fe

Gal. iv. 5. your : And because ye are Sons, Ge

hath sent forth the Spirit of his So  
into your Hearts. A Right to a

the Ordinances of the Gospel-Wor

ship, and most peculiar Privilege

of the Gospel-State. They wh

are made Sons, have a Right to th

*Childrens Bread*. Every one wh

has truly given himself to the Lord

and can clear this single Point ;

certainly fit for the Lord's Table

and has an undoubted Right to it

For 'tis the Lord's Table, and no

the Table of any Mortal ; and h

Will must be observed in the Rule

of Admission, as well as the Me

thods of Administration : As non

should be admitted who have not

Claim by Gospel-Right, so non

should be refused who have ; that i

who heartily consent to the Gospel

Covenant. In short, you are in

terested in the comprehensive Pro

mises of the new Covenant : Tha

the Lord will give Grace and Glory

Personal and Sacramental.

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and no good Thing will he withhold; Sect. II.  
That all Things which befall you shall  
work together for good. And Godliness  
with the Promise of the Life which  
now is, and of that which is to come.  
Further; You will be entitled to  
the special Protection and Care of  
Providence. By giving your selves  
to him, you engage his Care of  
you: If you put your selves under  
his Protection, you secure a special  
regard. For will he not take care  
of his own, who feeds the Fowls Mat. vi.  
of the Air, and clothes the Grass of 26, 30.  
the Field? If he denies the Faith, 1 Tim. v.  
and is worse than an Infidel, who 8.  
provides not for his own; will he be  
unmindful of us, or unfaithful to  
his Word? No, he will watch over  
you by an indulgent Providence,  
and be concerned for your Welfare,  
he is not for any others: He will Psal. cxix.  
look upon you, and be merciful to you, 132.  
he useth to do to those who love his  
Name. He will keep what you com-  
mit to him, and provide for your  
Safety



Se&t. II. Safety and Relief in danger. He will *never* leave you in any Trial of Life, or suffer you to *perish* in your *Affliction*; for he was *tempted like as we are*; and *touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*; and *knows how to have Compassion*. He will guide your ways in every perplexing Strait, and prosper your Affairs, so far as is fit, and bless your Seed after you. Besides the Experience of a merciful Care all your days, you secure an Entail of Mercy upon your Posterity. *The Children of thy Servants shall continue, and their Seed shall be established for ever.* And how large a Prospect does this open, and how vast and various Encouragement does it afford?

Psal. cii.  
28.

But this is not all; you are secure of *Heaven* at last. 'Tis a plain Evidence that they are *given to him of the Father*, who have *given themselves to him*; That he had a *Purpose of Mercy* towards them before the *Foundation of the World*; and

will give them eternal Life. They Sect. II.  
have now a *Right to the Tree of*  
*Life*, and will be safely brought to  
the Possession of it. Every Child  
of God is an *Heir* of Heaven; eve-  
ry faithful Follower of Christ shall  
be with him for ever. If we are Rom. viii.  
*Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God,*<sup>17.</sup>  
*and joint Heirs with Christ.* If a Gal. iv. 7.  
*Son, then an Heir of God thro Christ.*  
Our Lord tells his Disciples; *where*  
*I am, there shall also my Servant be.*  
They will be *glorified together* with  
him, and share in the Honours of  
his exalted State; *To him who over-* Rev. iii.  
*cometh, will I grant to sit with me*<sup>21.</sup>  
*in my Throne.* What happy Conse-  
quences are these, and how power-  
ful to persuade to give our selves to  
the Lord!

But now let us view the other  
side of the Case, and suppose on the  
other hand; that you *don't* give  
your selves to him, and continue  
not to do so; what will be the Con-  
sequence of that? Let me repre-

Sect. II.  sent and plead the matter with you a little. Consider the *State* you must be supposed to be in. What is the Condition in which you now stand? In whose Possession do you lie, and to whom do you belong? Have you ever pondered the matter, or suffered such a Thought to enter and sink into your Heart? You cannot stand *Neutral*, or be indifferent to either side. You must be of one side or other. Our Lord expressly tells us: *You cannot serve God and Mammon.* And he Mat. xii. 30. *who is not with me, is against me; and he who gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* You must be either Christ's or the Devil's. These are the two great *Heads* to which every one belongs, and who divide the whole World between them. Every Soul is a *Prize* which both Parties court and contend for, and one or other certainly wins and carries off. Now if you are not the Lord's whose are you in the mean time

and whom do you give your selves Sect. II.  
to? Why you are in Bondage to  
Sin and the Devil, and submit to  
the vilest Slavery and Vassalage.  
Our Lord tells the unbelieving  
Jews; *Ye are of your Father the De-* Joh. viii.  
*vil. And the Prince of the Power of* 44.  
*the Air works in the Children of Dis-* Eph. ii. 2.  
*obedience. You are led Captive by* 2 Tim. ii.  
*Satan at his pleasure, and serve di-* 26.  
*vers Lusts and Pleasures. Are you* Tit. iii. 3.  
content with such a state of Things?

Can you be easy or patient under  
such a Bondage? Satisfied with such  
a Lord, whom none of you dare to  
own, or can endure to see?

Besides; you are *uninterested* in  
saving Blessings. If you don't be-  
long to him, and are not his; what  
pretence can you have to any thing  
which is his, to the Purchase of his  
Blood, or Promise of the Covenant?  
You can have no Claim of Right,  
or Ground of Plea. The account  
the Apostle gives of the Christian  
*Ephesians* in their *Gentile* State, may

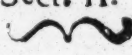
Sect. II. be applied to Unbelievers under the Gospel: That at *that time ye*

Eph. ii. 12. *were without Christ, Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.* And the Apostle John

1 Joh. v. speaks directly to this Case: He who hath the Son hath Life; and he who hath not the Son, hath not Life. In this state of spiritual Distance and Neglect, of Estrangement and Alienation from him, you can have no one saving Benefit by him; not one Sin can be pardoned, nor any single instance of special Favour; no actual Right, or well grounded Hope.

Again, you must needs be *un-*concerned in his special Care. You share in the common Bounty of Providence indeed, for *in him we live and move.* He takes the same care of you, he does of all his Creatures; of Herbs and Plants of the Spires of Grass, and the *Li-*



lies of the Fields; of the *animal* Sect. II.  
Creation; of Flies and Worms.   
But you have no Right to the special and peculiar Concern he shews towards his own; the Tenderneſs of Care and conſtant Regard to their Interests and Welfare. You muſt ſhift for your ſelves, and do as well as you can. He is under no Obligation to any gracious Regards; or to ſhew more kindneſs to a Sinner than to a Bird or a Worm. And his common Mercy is free and precarious, which may be denied or withdrawn at pleaſure. He may ſtrip you naked, and leave you deſolate at any time, without Impeachment or Challenge. Yea, he will for ever withdraw at laſt, and withhold all the Good he ever ſhewed them. He will leave them in their greateſt Extremity, and deride their foreſt Diſtreſs: He will ſtand by and behold their Miſery without any Reliefs of Mercy or Touches of Compaſſion towards them.

Sect. II. *I called, but you refused; I stretched out my Hand, but no man regarded.*  
 Prov. i. 24. — *I will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh.* Here-upon again,

He will inflict the heaviest *Wrath* upon the finally Disobedient. He will vindicate the Cause of his slighted Goodness, and injured Mercy, against all wilful Refusers, and revenge the quarrel of his broken Covenant. And according to the length of his Patience, and measure of Goodness, will be the degree of Severity and Weight of his final Wrath. Those who would not that he should reign over them, will be brought forth and slain before him.

Luk. xix. 27. And he will be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in Flames of Fire, taking Vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the Gospel. And we find every where not only certain and inevitable Ruin threatned, but fiery Wrath and flaming Vengeance, the hottest Hell,

Hell, and lowest depths of Misery. Sect. II.  
*Much more shall not we escape, who-  
 ever else do, if we turn away from* <sup>Heb. xii.</sup> *him who speaketh from Heaven.*

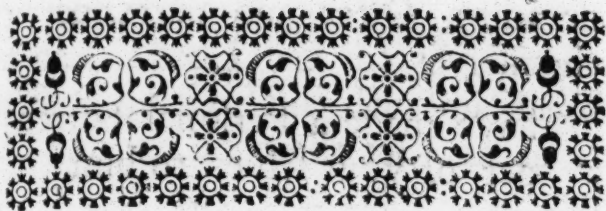
They who despise the Goodness of  
 God, *treasure up unto themselves* <sup>Rom. ii. 4.</sup> *Wrath against the day of Wrath.*

They prepare Fuel for the ever-  
 lasting Burning, and heat the fiery  
 Furnace seven times hotter. *It will  
 be more tolerable for Sodom and Go-  
 morrah, for Tyre and Sidon in the  
 day of Judgment, than for them:*  
 Those who were guilty of the grof-  
 fest Impieties, and greatest Abuse of  
 natural Light. They will *perish* <sup>Heb. x. 29.</sup> *without Mercy, and under a sorer Pu-  
 nishment, than ignorant Heathens, or  
 disobedient Jews.*

To conclude; Their Eyes will  
 be open when 'tistoo late, and they  
 will be wise at last in vain, who  
 now refuse to give themselves to  
 him, and make light of the Offers  
 of his Mercy. Let all these Con-  
 siderations concur to engage every

~ Sect. II. Soul, Younger and Elder, in one  
common Offer and Surrender of  
themselves to the Lord: Let us  
break up with this parting Resolu-  
tion, and let there be no one dis-  
senting Voice, not one single dis-  
agreeing Vote.



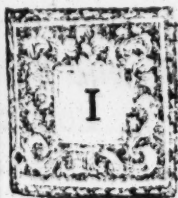


Of Sacramental  
**Self-Dedication.**

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2 COR. VIII. 5.

*And this they did, not as we hoped,  
 but first gave their own selves  
 to the Lord, and unto us by  
 the Will of God.*

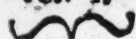


PROCEED now to  
 Sacramental Dedication  
 of our selves to the  
 Lord; and shall pro-  
 pose,

E 5

I. To





- I. To explain the Nature of it.
- II. To press it upon you who have made a Personal Surrender of your selves to him.

### SECT. I.

I. **T**O *explain* the Nature of Sacramental Dedication, or Covenanting with the Lord. Here I shall briefly shew,

1. That the Lord's Supper is a *Covenanting* Ordinance, and proper for Self-Dedication.

2. What *sort* of Covenanting or Dedication it ought to be.

§. 1. The Lord's Supper is a *Covenanting* Ordinance, and proper for Self-Dedication. To this purpose, we must consider that the Lord's Supper, like the *Jewish* Passover, fitly comes under a double Consideration; as an Act of solemn *Commemoration*, and of Self-Dedication.

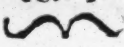
'Tis

Personal and Sacramental.

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'Tis an Act of Commemoration. *Sect. I.*

The Passover was first appointed as a means of their Escape from the destroying Angel, and was designed to be a perpetual Memorial in all Generations of their miraculous Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage after three hundred and thirty Years. *This day shall be to you for a* *Exod. xii.*  
*Memorial, and you shall keep it as a* *14.*  
*Feast to the Lord throughout your*  
*Generation.* And they were required to give this Account to their Children in after times: 'Tis the *Ver. 27.*  
*Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who*  
*passed over the Houses of the Children*  
*of Israel in Egypt, when he smote*  
*the Egyptians, and delivered our*  
*Houses.* The whole Conduct of the first Passover, with bitter Herbs and unleavened Bread, &c. was designed to represent and preserve the Remembrance of their cruel Servitude and Bondage. So the Lord's Supper was expressly instituted in the Commemoration of the  
Death

**Sect. I.**  Death of Christ, and our spiritual Deliverance by him. We are to *do this in Remembrance of him*, or as a solemn Memorial of him, appointed to preserve in the Church a perpetual Remembrance of the Redeemer's Sufferings, and keep up a lively Sense of his dying Love upon Believers Hearts. 'Tis not only a simple Recollection or Calling to mind, what he has done for us, but a solemn Declaration of it to others, and preserving the Remembrance of it in the World. And Bread and Wine are a fit Memorial of our sacrificed Lord, and a *sensible* signification of his Body and Blood.

But then it must be considered too as an Act of *Dedication*. The Passover is expressly called a *Sign* in this sense: It *shall be for a Sign to thee upon thy Hands, and for a Memorial between thy Eyes, that the Lord's Law may be in thy Mouth; for with a strong Hand hath the Lord brought*

Exod. xiii.  
9.

# Personal and Sacramental.

85

brought thee out of Egypt. And Sect. I.  
 none were suffered to partake of it,   
 who were not circumcised: *This is* Exod. xii.  
*the Ordinance of the Passover, there* 43.  
*shall no Stranger eat thereof, but every*  
*Man-servant who is bought for Money,*  
*when thou hast circumcised him, then*  
*shall he eat the Passover.* And ex-  
 pressly, *no uncircumcised Person shall* Ver. 48.  
*eat thereof.* The Lord's-Supper is  
 not only a sacred *Festival* or Enter-  
 tainment of Love; but 'tis a Feast  
 upon a Sacrifice, and a Feast of De-  
 dication, or a Token of Covenant-  
 Engagement. The Apostle plainly  
 points at this sense, when he says;  
*For even Christ our Passover was sa-* I Cor. v.  
*crificed for us, therefore let us keep* 7.  
*the Feast, not with the old Leaven, nei-*  
*ther with the Leaven of Malice and*  
*Sin, wickedness, but with the unleavened*  
*bread of Sincerity and Truth.*  
 It was a known Custom among  
 the Heathens as well as the Jews,  
 to enter into Covenant by the Rite  
 of solemn Festival; particularly up-  
 on

- Sect. I. on their Sacrifices. So *Isaac* made  
 a Covenant with *Abimeleck*: He  
 Gen. xxvi. made for him, and those who rose up  
 30. with him a Feast, and they did eat  
 and drink, and rose up betimes in  
 the Morning, and sware to one ano-  
 Gen. xxxi. ther So *Laban* covenanted with  
 44. *Jacob*, and *Israel* with the *Gibeonites*.  
 Josh. ix. We have a memorable Instance of  
 14. this upon *Moses's* delivery of the  
 Law to the People, and settling the  
 Exod. xxiv. Jewish Dispensation: He built an Al-  
 4. tar under the Hill, and twelve Pillars  
 according to the twelve Tribes of *Is-  
 rael*, to represent the two Parties  
 Ver. 5. Covenanting; then he offers Burnt-  
 Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and  
 Ver. 6. took half of the Blood, and put it  
 into the Bason, and half of the Blood  
 he sprinkled on the Altar; to sig-  
 nify the mutual Stipulation between  
 God and them. And then he took  
 Ver. 8. the Blood and sprinkled it on the  
 People, and said, Behold the Blood of  
 the Covenant, which the Lord hath  
 made with you concerning all these  
 words:



Personal and Sacramental.

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words: whereby the Covenant is Sect. I.  
made and confirmed between God and you To which the Apostle refers; saying, *This is the Blood of the Testament which God hath enjoined* <sup>Heb. ix. 20.</sup>  
unto you. And the Jews were required to destroy all the Monuments of Idolatry among the Nations when they came into Canaan: *Lest thou make a Covenant with the* <sup>Ex. xxxiv.</sup>  
*Inhabitants of the Land, and eat of his Sacrifice* \*. This sense is plainly intimated in the words of the Institution, and when our Lord set up the Christian Dispensation: *For this is my Blood of the New* <sup>Mat. xxvi. 28.</sup>  
*Testament, which is shed for many, for the Remission of Sins.* And in the Apostle, *This Cup is the* <sup>1 Cor. xi. 25.</sup>  
*New Testament in my Blood: My last Will and Testament sealed and*

---

\* *Ὠρκισμός* among the Greeks, signifies the Sacrifice which was slain when they made a Covenant. Hence *ὄρκια τήναι* is used in Homer, to make a Covenant.

Se&t. I. confirmed by my Blood, and is of full force by the Death of the Testator, or him who makes the Will. 'Tis my dying Legacy to all my faithful Followers. But then the word signifies a *Covenant* as well as a Testament; and is, both at the same time in different respects. 'Tis the Covenant of the Gospel sealed by his Blood; in which sense we read of the *Blood of the everlasting Covenant*. The new Covenant founded and ratified by the Blood of Christ, the Mediator of it, in which the Pardon of Sin, and divine Favour are secured and confirmed to all true Believers; that is, to every one who heartily consents to it, comes under the Bonds of it, and depends upon its Security.

And 'tis observable that the Apostle uses the Expressions of *sitting at Meat in an Idol's Temple*, and *partaking of the Table of Devils*, to signify their owning their Worship, and having Communion with those

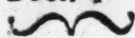
Spi-

Heb. xiii.  
20.

1 Cor. viii.  
10.

Ch. x. 21.

Spirits. And upon this account it Sect. I. is represented by the antient Writers of the Christian Church under the Notion of a *Sacrament*, which signifies a military *Oath*; the Allegiance sworn by the Soldiers to the Emperor or General. So *Tertullian* De Corona, cap. 3. calls it, *Eucharistia Sacramentum*, the Sacrament of the Eucharist. And we have a noble Testimony to this sense in the younger *Pliny*, where, in the account he gives to the Emperor *Trajan*, of the Christian Worship, he says, they did *Sacramento se obstringere*, bind themselves with an Oath, to live suitable Plin. Lib. 10. Ep. 97. to their Profession. And in this sense 'tis used in the Law of *England* to this day; where *dicere super Sacramentum suum*, is to declare upon Oath. So that 'tis within the direct design of this sacred Appointment, to renew our *Covenant* with God, as well as *remember* the Death of Christ; and the whole Nature of it lies in these two.



§. 2. I shall next consider what *kind* of Covenanting or Dedication it ought to be; or *how* we should give our selves to the Lord in this holy Ordinance. Here it must be considered; That the general Nature of it is the same with *Personal* Covenanting with God: There is one common Nature to it, which way soever it is done. Thus at the Lord's Table we engage our selves to Him, under all the same Considerations of Him; with the same **Acts**, and the same Properties; as we do in more private and personal Surrender of our selves to him. It has all this in common with the former; for we are not to do a *Thing* which we never did before, but rather in another *Way* and Manner. And yet there are some Circumstances in Sacramental Dedication, different from the former, and more appropriate and peculiar to it self. For Example:

(1.) It

*Personal and Sacramental.*

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(1.) It is *Social* and in Conjunction with others. 'Tis Covenanting with God in Company, and with a whole Society of Christians: many concur together in this solemn Transaction at the same time, all resigning and devoting themselves to God; renewing their Covenant-Consent, and engaging themselves afresh to him: like a whole Order of Men taking the Oath of Allegiance together in a Court of Judicature.

In *Personal* Covenanting with God, each one gives himself to the Lord singly and alone; and that is usually best done in the Retirement of a Closet, or some solitary Place; or at least with the silent Consent of Heart, and suitable Workings of a Man's own Soul; and others are not ordinarily present with us, or privy to it. But at the Lord's Table, we join our selves to the Lord in *Society* with others, and act by one common Consent. The whole



Sect. I.

whole Church at once by that Act, resigns and gives up it self to God.

'Tis an eminent Branch of Social

1 Cor. x.

17.

Worship: *For we being many, are one*

*Bread and one Body, for we are all*

*Partakers of that \* one Bread.* And

Ver. 16.

'tis the *Communion of his Body and*

*Blood, in this sense.* The Sense of

our Attendance there is; "I con-

cur with this Society in giving

my self to the Lord: I join with

all here present in a Self-surrender

and Dedication to him."

(2.) 'Tis *Publick* and *Visible*.

We make an open Profession of

our Relation to him, and Expectation

from him; of our Dependence

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\* The words of the Apostle are mistaken by the Criticks I have seen; ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν ᾧ οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν: because there is one Bread, who are many, are one Body. We are not the one Bread, but the one Body; and therefore we are one, tho many, because the Bread is one of which we all partake. οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἄρτου μετέχομεν: We partake of Christ the Bread in Sacramental eating, and become all one Body, of which Christ is the common Head.

dend

*Personal and Sacramental.*

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Sect. I.

dence upon his Blood, and Subjection to his Authority. 'Tis a publick Act in the view of the World, and we hereby *avow the Lord to be our God*: and are expressly said, to *show forth his Death till he come*, as the People of *Israel* were to *show* their Children the meaning of the Passover. It carries in it a publick Declaration before God, Angels and Men, that we belong to God, and are the Disciples and Followers of a crucified Jesus; that we place our Trust in the Merit of his Death, and hope for Acceptance with God, and every saving Blessing, thro the Atonement of his Blood.

Deut. xxvi.

17.

1 Cor. xi.

26.

Exod. xiii.

8.

*Personal* Covenanting with God is a secret Thing, as well as solitary, and is done privately, as well as alone. 'Tis a Transaction between God and a Man's own Soul, and falls not under the Notice and Observation of others about us: But *Sacramental* Covenanting with God, carries in it an open Declaration,

Sect. I. tion, and is a visible Transaction  
 before the World: 'Tis the most ex-

Mat. x. 32. plicit way of owning and *confessing*  
*him before Men.* The distinct sense  
 is thus much: "I declare to all  
 " the World my Relation to Christ;  
 " and call all present to witness  
 " that I am not *ashamed of the Gos-*  
 " *pel of Christ, or offended at his*  
 " *Cross*: I glory in my Interest in  
 " this great Lord, and account  
 " *Christ crucified*, who was to the  
 " *Jews a Stumbling-Block*, and to  
 " the *Greeks Foolishness*; to be the  
 " great Instance of the *Power of*  
 " *God, and the Wisdom of God.*  
 " desire it may be understood as  
 " a visible Signification of my en-  
 " tire Trust, and unfeigned De-  
 " votedness to him."

(3.) 'Tis a *solemn* Thing, and by  
 Psal. l. 5. sensible Rites. We read of *his Saints*  
*who made a Covenant with him by*  
*Sacrifice*, i. e. by the solemn Rite  
 of Sacrificing. The Lord's Supper  
 is a *Memorial* of the Sacrifice of

the crucified Redeemer, and Co-Sect. I.  
venanting with him by this sa-  
cred Rite. In the Lord's Supper the  
Gospel is more fully represented to  
our *Senses*, than in the written Word,  
or in the Preaching of it: not only  
to our Eyes and Ears, but to our  
Touch and Taste. This makes it  
not only visible and open before  
the World, but gives a Weight and  
Authority to it, and adds an Aw-  
fulness and Solemnity. Bread and  
Wine at the Lord's Table, broken  
and poured out, taken, eaten and  
drunk; are not only a visible Image  
and Memorial, of the broken Body,  
and Blood shed of the crucified  
Redeemer: but a *Sign* and Token  
between him and us; a *Seal* of the  
Covenant on both sides, or a so-  
lemn Ratification of it by outward  
Acts and visible Symbols.

*Personal* Dedication delights in  
the Shade of Retirement, and ad-  
mits no more Solemnity than the  
humble Posture of the Body, and  
devout

Sect. I. devout Exercises of the Soul. But  
 ~~~~~ Sacramental Dedication has the  
 Form as well as Virtue of an Oath or
 Vow; like *lifting up our Hand to the
 Most High*; or *subscribing with the
 Hand to the Lord*. We bind our
 selves to him by solemn Declaration
 and virtual Imprecation. We ap-
 peal to him as to the Sincerity of
 Heart in the Covenant-Surrender
 we make: *Lord thou knowest all
 Things, thou knowest that I love thee.*
 And there is an Implication of Judg-
 ment to the unworthy Receiver,
 or Abuser of his Mercy. 'Tis as if
 we should say, " Let this solemn
 " Transaction at thy Table be a
 " Witness this day, between thee
 " and us, like the *heap of Stones*
 " between *Laban* and *Jacob*, of a per-
 " nitent Return to God, and hearty
 " Resignation to him. So help me
 " God, as I sincerely give up my
 " self to Thee: Let me not obtain
 " thy Favour, or receive the Par-
 " don of my Sins, if I am not un-
 " feignedly

Joh. xxi.
 17.

feignedly willing to be the Sect. I.
 Lord's, or deal deceitfully with
 thee."

I shall only desire it may be re-
 member'd here; that tho this Or-
 dinance is a very solemn Thing, and
 requires Sincerity and Reverence;
 yet 'tis a *gracious* Appointment, and
 expressive of Kindness. For 'tis a
 feast of Love, and Entertainment
 of Friends. *We enter into his Ban-* Cant. ii. 4.
quetting-House, and his Banner over
us is Love. And 'tis the Commu-
 nion or Participation of *his Blood* I Cor. x.
and Body: We are by the Exercise 16.
 of our Faith, and in a spiritual
 sense, to *eat his Flesh*, and *drink* Joh. vi.
his Blood. We are received as the 54.
friends of the Bridegroom, and
 treated with *familiar* Kindness:
 and no pretence of Reverence and
 fear must check the Exercise of
 Love, or destroy the Freedom he
 allows. Upon this account the
 posture of those who feast toge-
 ther, seems best to agree to the Ex-

F ample

Sect. I. ample of the Institution, and Design of the Ordinance; *i. e.* to represent the gracious Condescension of the Redeemer, and the familiar Treatment he proposes to give them.

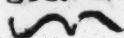
(4.) 'Tis a *standing* Thing, and to be often renewed. So the Apostle expressly speaks: *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup ye shew the Lord's Death till he come* *i. e.* till his glorious Appearance at the great Day. The former Expression seems to imply the Frequency of it, as the latter does the Continuance and Perpetuity of it. 'Tis a *standing* Ordinance of the Gospel-Worship, and always to remain in the Christian Church; to preserve the Remembrance of the Redeemer's Death, and keep up a lively Sense of our Engagements to him: that so great a Transaction may never come by length of Time to be forgot in the World; or the Sense of it languish and cool upon

1 Cor. xi.
26.

our Minds. And it must be frequently repeated. The Expression necessarily supposes, That we are often to do it, and 'tis not to be only once done; as often at least as we have opportunity, and upon every stated Return of Sacramental Seasons. We renew our Covenant with God, and strengthen our Engagements to him by Sacramental Bonds: We come under fresh Obligations by every solemn Attendance.

Here is an observable difference too: We are but *once* baptized, and that Seal of the Covenant is not to be repeated; for that is the *Initial* Seal, or first Entrance into the Christian State: like a Child's being entered into such a School, and under such a Master; and we can be but once initiated, or entered into the Christian Church. So the *first* hearty Surrender of our selves to God, or Consent to his Covenant, brings us into a Covenant-State,

Sect. I.



and entitles to Covenant-Mercies; tho there is always supposed the *Continuance* of that Consent: and there may be fit Occasions and Opportunities, of making it more explicit, and renewing it over again. But at the Lord's Supper, it is *required* to be often, and we are obliged to renew it: to strengthen all our former Engagements, and bind them the faster upon us; to make the Impression deeper, and preserve a more lively Sense upon our Minds.

So that the true Sense and proper Workings of one who gives himself to the Lord in this holy Ordinance; may be conceived of in such a manner as this: " I have already given my self to thee, and made a personal Surrender, I hope, with sincerity of Heart, and acceptance with God through Christ; I now come, according to thy Appointment, to make a solemn Commemoration of the
" Death

Death of Christ, to call it afresh Sect. I.

“to mind, and represent to my
“self by these Elements Jesus
“Christ, *evidently set forth cru-*
“*cified before me.* And while I am
“contemplating his dying Love,
“and warmed with the sense of
“Love to him; I desire to recog-
“nize the new Covenant in his
“Blood; and in conjunction with
“this Society, in this open and
“publick Manner, and by these
“solemn Rites; to renew my En-
“gagements and Surrender to thee.
“Let me *obtain Mercy to be faith-*
“*ful,* and be assisted and secured
“by the Grace of the Covenant in
“every Article of Covenant-Duty.
“So help me Lord, as I desire sin-
“cerely to be Thine.”

I shall only add here: If the for-
mal *writing* and sealing a Covenant,
which some excellent Persons have
recommended, and many serious
Christians have practised; can be
supposed to have any greater So-
lemnity,

Sect. II. Ilemnity, or peculiar Advantage, without or besides the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which is a *Divine* Appointment for this very purpose; tho 'tis only Human and Prudential, I would not pretend to censure or discourage it.

S E C T. II.

II. I SHALL now *press* it upon you, and plead the matter with you. And I would speak a little distinctly to two Heads.

1. Consider the *Obligations* you lie under, who have made a personal Surrender of your selves to God.

2. Obviate some of the principal *Prejudices* in the Minds of Men against it.

§. 1. Consider the *Obligations* you lie under, who have made a personal Surrender of your selves to God. I shall represent and urge them in the following Particulars: (1.)

(1.) There is the divine *Appoint-* Sect. II.
ment and Command. This is the Reason and Measure of all Duty, into which the Obligation must be resolved at last. The divine Will is the highest Reason, and unquestionably binding to the Consciences of Men. Whatsoever is found to bear the stamp of an Institution, challenges the Regards of every sincere Soul. Now Sacramental Covenanting with God is a plain Appointment of Gospel-Worship, and made the Duty of all the Disciples of Christ. Indeed 'tis a purely *positive* Institution, and wholly depends upon the divine Will, which is peculiar to the two Seals of the Covenant, like the negative Precept against *eating of the Tree of* Gen. ii. 17.
Knowledg of Good and Evil; which was a kind of Sacrament of the first Covenant. But 'tis not of the less Force for all that, or of the lighter Consequence in the Breach of it; as appears in that terrible Instance.

Sect. II.

Luk. xxii.

19.

The whole World was lost by the Breach of a merely positive Precept. *This do in Remembrance of me*, is as plain and express a Command as any in the Bible, and carries in it all the Force of Authority and Love: For it was the last Command of the dying Redeemer; his solemn Charge to his Disciples just before his Sufferings, and while they were in view. 'Tis as if he had said to them: "Let this be the Memorial of your dying Lord, when I am removed out of our sight." "Let this be the Token of my Love to you, and your Fidelity to me: That you may not forget me when I am gone, and what I have done for you. Let this be a perpetual Remembrance till I come."

And as he instituted this Ordinance in his own Person with his Disciples, and required their Observance of it; so we find the Apostle gives particular command to the

Personal and Sacramental.

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the Christian Church in his Name. *Señ. II.*
That which I received of the Lord, *1 Cor. xi.*
delivered unto you : to be a stand- *23.*
ing Appointment of solemn Wor-
ship, and observed in all the
Churches of Christ. He uses the
same manner of Expression con-
cerning the great Articles of the
Gospel-Doctrine. For *I delivered* *Chap. xv.*
unto you first of all, that which I also *3.*
received, how that Christ died for our
sins according to the Scriptures, and
was buried, and rose again the third
Day. He speaks of it in several
places as a Thing well known a-
mong them. *The Cup of Blessing* *1 Cor. x.*
which we bless, is it not the Commu- *6.*
union of the Blood of Christ? the
bread which we break, is it not the
Communion of the Body of Christ?
And he speaks of the *Cup of the* *Ver. 21.*
Lord, and the *Lord's Table,* i. e.
of his Appointment and Institution.
And he often reproves and admo-
nishes them of the Abuses and Irre-
gularities which had crept in among
F 5 them.

Sect. II. them. *Now in this that I declare*
 I Cor. xi. *unto you, I praise you not, that you*
 17. *come together not for the better, but*
 Ver. 20, *for the worse. And again, When you*
 21. *come together into one place, this is not*
to eat the Lord's Supper, for in eat-
ing, every one taketh before other his
 Ver. 33. *own Supper. And, When you come*
together to eat, tarry one for another.

We read in the Gospel of the
 Mat. xxii. Marriage-Supper which the King
 12. made for his Son. This Feast com-
 prehends the whole Provision of
 Gospel-Grace: All that Mercy
 which God has provided for return-
 ing Sinners, and all the Blessings of
 the Gospel-State. But then as the
 Lord's Supper is one principal branch
 of the Means of Grace, and Pro-
 vision of Mercy; a mark of his
 Favour, and means of our Good
 so it must be understood to be in-
 cluded and comprehended in it, that
 not singly and directly intended
 'tis at least one *Dish* at the Gospel

news the Invitation upon their De- Ver. 4.

led: i. e. overcome them with ma-

dy; I have prepared my Dinner, my Oxen and Fatlings are killed. The

Ministers of the Gospel, the Ser-
vants of the heavenly King, are

employed not only to call Sinners
to Repentance, and bring wan-

dring Souls to God: but to invite good Men to the Feast, and

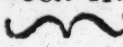
partake of the Provisions of their Father's House. We invite you to

this blessed Banquet and Feast of Love, by the Authority of Christ,

the Lord of the Feast, and Arguments he has put into our Mouths.

If

Sect. II.

 If you own the Authority of Christ, and plain Appointment of his Word; if you think your selves obliged to other Instances of Duty, as Prayer, Hearing the Word, &c. you must needs apprehend your selves obliged to this; for there is the same Reason, and same Authority for the one, as there is for the other. And is it not reasonable that we should own his Authority, as well as remember his Love, and comply with his Call, as ever we hope for the benefit of his Death? Will he not highly resent, with the greatest Reason, the Contempt of both, if we *make light* of his Call, and *begin to make Excuse*?

(2.) The *Practice* of Christians in all Ages: Of the whole Christian Church all along, in pursuance of a divine Appointment. The constant Practice of the Church of God, if it is from the beginning of Christianity, and of all the Churches in every place; tho it will not

make

make a divine Institution, or amount to a proper Authority, yet 'tis very proper to declare one, and a probable Argument and Proof of it. For 'tis not reasonable to suppose, they should generally run into so great an Error from the very Beginning, and perpetuate it all along. Their Practice is a sensible Evidence of a divine Appointment, and a good Comment at least, upon the Divine Law.

Now this appears to be the Case here, even in the Scripture-Times, and from earliest Notices of a Christian Church in the World. At the first Appearance of our Lord to his Disciples, after his Resurrection, *He was known to them in breaking of Bread:* Observing the solemn Institution, he gave them immediately before his Suffering; if that place is to be understood of Sacramental eating. As soon as any Numbers were converted to Christianity by the Preaching of the Apostles, and Believers

Luk. xxiv. 35.

Sect. II. Believers were formed into worshipping Assemblies; that is, as soon as ever a Christian Church was gathered in any Place; we find this was their Practice. In the first Instance we meet with of this kind,

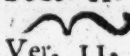
A^{ct.} ii. 41. 'tis said; *Then they who gladly received the Word, were baptized, and the same day were added to them above three thousand Souls: Such a Collection of Christians as was sufficient to form a Christian Church.*

Ver. 42. *And they continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread, and Prayer. That is plainly Sacramental breaking of Bread, for 'tis joined with Doctrine, Fellowship and Prayer; which are parts of religious Worship, and divine Appointments. And we find a considerable time after it was the solemn Exercise of the first Day of the Week, when they met together*

A^{ct.} xx. 7. *ther for publick Worship: And upon the first Day of the Week, when the Disciples were gathered together to break*

Personal and Sacramental.

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break Bread, Paul preached to them, Sect. II.
ready to depart on the morrow. When 
he therefore was come up again, and Ver. 11.
had broken Bread and eaten, and
talked a long while, even till break of
day, he departed.

So in all succeeding Ages, from
the earliest Dates of Time to this
day; there never was a Christian
Church without a Sacrament. The
Primitive Christians, who lived
nearest the Apostles Times, and
had a warmer Zeal, made it a con-
stant part of their solemn Worship,
and celebrated the Lord's Supper
every Lord's Day *. And we are
doubtless obliged to go our way forth Song i. 8.
by the Footsteps of the Flock, and be

* Τὼ ὃ Ἑλὶς ἡμέραν κοινῇ πάντες τὼ συνέ-
λασιν ποιμεῖσθαι ἐπειδὴ Ἰησοῦς Χεῖς ὁ ἡμέτερος
Σωτὴς τῇ αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνέστη—
Ἀγὶος πνεύματος καὶ ὁ ὄντος καὶ ὁ πνεύματος εὐχὰς
ὁμοίως καὶ εὐχαριστίας ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ ἀναπέμπει,
καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐπυσφημεῖ λέγων τὸ Ἀμήν, καὶ ἡ διάδοσις
καὶ ἡ μετέληψις ἀπο τοῦ εὐχαριστηθέντων ἐχάσω γί-
νεται. Just. Martyr. Apol. 2.

Fol-

Sect. II. *Followers* of them in every Age, as *they followed Christ*. Should we affect a Difference from the whole Christian Community, and think our selves wiser than the best Men in every Age, who ever lived upon the Earth? Or chuse to wander up and down, like a loose *Sheep*, who belongs to no Fold, and is withdrawn from the Shepherd's Care, and liable to starve with Want, or be torn by wild Beasts? Hereupon,

(3.) I argue from the *Nature* and Design of the Ordinance it self. I consider the Lord's Supper as the more eminent Badg of Discipleship in the Adult, and peculiar Rite of the Gospel-Worship; the great mark of Distinction between the *Church* and the *World*, or such as appear true Believers in Christ, and other Men.

The *Jewish* Church was distinguished by its peculiar Sacrifices and Rites of Worship from the Heathen Nations,

Nations, and which were so far Sect. II.
 from being in compliance, or re-
 semblance of theirs; that there is
 no reasonable Account to be given
 of many of them; but that they
 were purposely appointed as marks
 of Distinction, and in direct oppo-
 sition to them. I reckon the Chris-
 tian Church is properly distinguish-
 ed by this peculiar Rite of Worship,
 from the Ignorant and Profane.
 'Tis represented as an *Enclosure* out
 of a Wilderness; as a *Garden en-*
closed, a Spring shut up, a Fountain Song iv. 12.
sealed: And every where spoke of
 as a distinct Society from the
 World; gathered out of it, and se-
 parated from it: as a *peculiar People*
to God; Called to be Saints, and
sanctified in Christ Jesus. Which
 certainly cannot be understood in
 any lower sense, than that of credi-
 ble Profession, and visible Distinc-
 tion and Separation. The other
 Ordinances of the Gospel are com-
 mon to all, and in order to bring
 them

Sect. II.  them into the Christian State. Heathens and Jews, and wicked Men attended the Preaching of the Apostles, and were by that means brought to believe, and added to the Church. But the Lord's Supper is proper to visible Christians, and those who appear to believe in Christ. 'Tis the *Childrens Bread*, and not to be *cast to Dogs*: The great mark of Peculiarity and Distinction between them and others. Indeed 'tis of all other the fittest and most proper for this purpose; for 'tis a Complication of all the other Ordinances of the Gospel, and comprehends every one under it. There is the Word, Prayer, Singing, Meditation, the Exercise of every Grace: and that is the most proper to be the distinguishing Ordinance, which is the most comprehensive, and carries all the rest in it.

Besides; the Nature of this Ordinance, as a Commemoration of

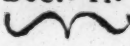
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the Death of Christ, and renewing Sect. II.
our Covenant with him; plainly
supposes and bespeaks Faith and
Consent: and tho a credible Pro-
fession of them, will entitle Men
to it in the sight of the Church,
who cannot know the Heart; yet
none but réal Christians have Right
in the sight of God, or are capable
of the Privileges or Duties of it.
This was so strictly observed in the
early times of the Christian Church,
that they did not only refuse it to
the Unworthy *, but would not
suffer others to be present at the
Celebration of it †. Now if a vi-
sible

* 'Ου παρὶ καὶ δικαίη μὴ χρῆσθαι τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ μὴ
πίνειν ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου. Orig. in Johan. "Ἡ τροφή
αὐτῆς—ἥτις ἐστὶν ἄλλω μετὰσχέειν ἐξ ὧν ἐστίν, ἢ τοῦ
πιστεύοντι ἀληθῶς εἶναι τα δεδιαγμένα ὑφ' ἡμῶν,
καὶ λυσταυδῶσα τὸ ἴδιον ἀφέσεως ἀμαρτιῶν, καὶ εἰς ἀνασ-
τήντησιν λαλῶν, καὶ ἕτως βιβνίσι, ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς παρέ-
σχευεν. Just. Martyr. Apol. 2.

† Semper etiam piæ initiationes arceunt profa-
nos, & arbitris caveant, nisi si impii minus me-
merunt. Tertul. Apol. Cap. 7.

Seet. II.  sible Distinction ought to be kept up, and a Difference made between the Church and the World; then true Believers ought to come to the Lord's Table, and enter into solemn Covenant with him. For if others should neglect it as well as you, and one has the same Right

This Sacrament is not first designed to make us Holy; but rather supposes us to be so; it is not a converting, but confirming Ordinance. It is properly our spiritual Food: And as all Food supposes a Principle of Life in him who receives it, which Life is by this means to be continued and supported; so the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is originally intended to preserve and maintain the spiritual Life, which we do or should receive in Baptism, or at least by a thorow Conversion after it. Upon which account, according to the true intent of this Sacrament, Men should not expect Life, but Growth from it: And see that there be something to be fed, before they seek out for Provision. For the truth is, for any one who is not passed from Death to Life, and has not in him that new living Principle, to come to the spiritual Repast, is upon the Matter, as absurd and preposterous, as if he who makes a Feast, should send to the Graves and Church-yards for Guests, or entertain and treat a Corps at a Banquet. Dr. South's Sermons, Vol. 2. pag. 347.

with

kept with another ; the Observation of Sect. II.
between it in time must wholly cease, ~~~~~
then and the great Mark of Distinction
to the be lost. The Church and the
to so World would be in a manner con-
or is founded together, without any vi-
ell as sible and peculiar Badg.

Right (4.) The *Engagements* we are un-
der already to God. We are so far
already engaged to God as necessa-
rily leads to this, and obliges to it.
For Example :

Our *Baptismal* Covenant. This
is the sacred Initiation by which we
become visible Disciples, and enter
into the Christian Church : We are
thereby given up to the Lord, and
brought under Engagements to him.
His Right to us is solemnly owned,
and our Obligations to him become
explicite. We are no longer at
liberty whose to be, or what to
do ; for we are already the Lord's
by solemn Dedication, and brought
under the same Obligations which
our Sacramental Covenant brings
us

Sect. II. us under, whether ever we come to it or no. And we are not so properly brought under a new Engagement, as we renew an old. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his Death?* obliged to die to Sin in imitation of his Death. And *as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ:* A professed Subjection to the Gospel of Christ and Conformity to him. Now every baptized Person ought to renew his Covenant with God at the Lord's Table, because that is only *recognizing* his Baptism, making it his own Act and Deed, and taking it upon himself in Person by this solemn Rite.

Rom. vi.
3.

Gal. iii. 27.

So again; our *Personal Surrender* or giving our selves to the Lord obliges to this. Every true Christian has given himself to the Lord by a hearty Consent and Choice at least implicitly and virtually if not formally and with Solemnity

He owns God for his God, and Se^{ct.} II. takes him for his Portion, and is unfeignedly devoted to his Interests and Service: And no Man can be a Christian who has not done so. And should not every one who is sincerely willing to be the Lord's, and has personally covenanted with him; renew that Covenant with God, and receive the Seal of it? Can you think it enough to have given your selves to him by the Consent of your Heart, while you refuse to own and strengthen the Engagement, in God's appointed Way? Does not that very thing oblige you to do it, and make it the plainer Duty?

(5.) The Benefit and *Advantage* of due Attendance. The Lord's Supper is an Appointment of Mercy, and Ordinance of great Benefit to true Believers. God seals his Covenant with them: It stands ratified and confirmed by mutual Engagements. We give our selves to him,
and

- Sect. II. and he gives himself to us: We oblige our selves to all his Service and he gives full Security of all Covenant-Blessings. 'Tis a good Evidence of Sincerity of Heart when we are willing to come under the Bonds of the Covenant, and give our selves to him with so great Solemnity. *We shall not be ashamed when we have respect to all his Commands: And shall be accounted*
- Pfal. cxix. 6. *Righteous before God, when we are found walking in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless. 'Tis a blessed Means of spiritual Strength and Support, and of great Refreshment and Joy*
- Song ii. 3. *We sit under his shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit is sweet to our Taste. 'Tis the great Nourishment and Food of the spiritual Life*
- Joh. vi. 55. *His Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed. We feed by Faith upon the true Bread which came down from Heaven.*

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There are proper Objects for the Sect. II.
lively Exercise of all our Graces; ~~~~~
of Repentance, Faith, Love, Joy,
Thankfulness, &c. And special In-
fluences and Communications of
the Divine Spirit. *While the King* Song i. 12.
sitteth at his Table, our Spikenard
sendeth forth the Smell thereof. And
when the North Wind awakes, and —iv. 16.
when the South Wind comes, and they
blow upon our Garden, the Spices
thereof flow out. The Society and
Fellowship of other Christians give
Life as well as Solemnity to the
Action; and we share in the warm-
th and most affectionate Prayers,
Joy as well as the Watchfulness and Care
of the whole Community.

The Experience of serious Chris-
tians can testify to the *Manifesta-*
tions of Christ in this holy Ordina-
nce, and the lively and enlarged
frame of their own Hearts. 'Tis
a great Opportunity of comfort-
able Enjoyments, and gracious
touchsafements from him. Per-

G

haps

Sect. II.

happens they never come nearer to God on this side of Heaven, or have more sensible *Tastes* of his Goodness; than sometimes in a right and prepared Frame at the Lord's Table. So that if we have any Care of our own Souls, and Regard to their Welfare, if we desire their flourishing and prosperous State, a more lively Sense, and Savour of God, or greater Improvement and Establishment of Heart: we must needs think ourselves obliged to a serious Attendance on the Lord's Table; because this is so peculiarly fitted for this purpose, and a blessed means to promote it. And no wonder Christians pine and languish in Grace; or groan under the Burden of prevailing Fear or Corruption; who neglect so great a means of their Assistance and Relief.

(6.) The *Testimony* of Conscience, especially in dying Christians. The cool Testimony of enlightened Conscience in most Men. Conscience tells them 'tis their Duty, and

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no Man pretends Conscience for Sect. 11.
not doing it. They bribe or bear
it down, by some deceitful Pretence
or diverting Affair. They cannot
disown the Duty, but only excuse
the Neglect.

But Conscience is never so awa-
kened and impartial, as upon a dying
Bed, delivered from every false
View, and all the Disguises of Art.
Suppose now a good Man dying,
coolly reviewing his past Life, and
carefully examining the State of
his Soul; free from the bias of
Prejudice and Interest; unfeignedly
desirous to know the Truth, and see
Things as they really are, and will
appear to be at the enlightened Tri-
bunal; when he is most in Earnest
and most Sincere: The Conscience
of a good Man will bear Testimony
to this Appointment, either by
fetching Comfort from Sacramental
Covenanting and solemn Dedication
of himself to God; or by charging
with Guilt, and reproaching his
Neglect.

Sect. II.

I have often, in the Course of several Years in the *Ministry*, been called to attend sick and dying Beds; and had occasion of making this Observation in almost innumerable Instances, and I doubt not 'tis so with others of my Brethren: If there has been any Knowledge of Religion, or serious Sense of God left upon their Minds; if they have not been grossly ignorant, or hardened in Sin; to be sure this has been one of the heavy Complaints and Burdens of the dying Creature. " Oh that I had attended the Lord's " Table! I have lived all my days " in the neglect of that solemn " Ordinance. I have been long " convinced of the Duty, and often " purposed and designed to " come; but one thing or other " always interposed and prevented. " Some Business of Life, or Scruples " of Mind has kept me away to this " time. If it please God to restore " and raise me up, to give me an

" longer

“ longer time of Trial and Means ;
“ I will immediately apply my self
“ to serious Preparation : and if
“ not, then the Lord pardon so
“ great a Neglect of my whole
“ Life.” And I could tell you of
some Persons of a religious Educa-
tion, and extraordinary Knowledg,
who not only grew negligent them-
selves, but undertook to justify
their Neglect, and be Advocates for
others ; who yet upon a dying Bed,
and when Conscience was thorowly
awakened, have owned their rash
Folly, and bitterly bewailed their
sinful Neglect. And Conscience
awakened is greatly to be regarded,
and an honourable Testimony to
divine Appointments. Don’t flight
the Voice of an enlightened Con-
science now, as you would not feel
the Lashes and Reproaches of an
enraged Conscience at last. It will
not be so easy to satisfy it then, as
it is to stifle or deceive it now : It
will

Sect. III. will speak out, and speak plain,
to the Terror as well as Conviction
of every careless Soul.

SECT. III.

§. 2. **I** Proceed now to obviate
some of the principal *Pre-
judices* in the Minds of Men against
it. To disarm them of the Wea-
pons by which they fight against
their own Souls, and strip them of
the Disguise by which they flatter
and deceive themselves. These
are of two sorts :

(1.) The Excuses of the Careless.

(2.) The Scruples of fearful Chris-
tians. I shall consider them both a
little briefly.

(1.) The *Excuses* of the Careless:
Of such who live in Security un-
der the Power of Ignorance, or
Prevalence of Sin. And tho 'tis
not their present and immediate
Duty, to come to the Lord's Ta-
ble ; yet 'tis their Duty to prepare
for

for it, and to be fit to come. Their *Sect. III.*
Pleas are commonly such as these. 

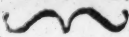
They pretend, they are already sufficiently *engaged* to God; for they were baptized in their early Years, and make a Profession of Religion in the World: They bear the mark of his Covenant, and attend upon all the other Ordinances of Worship; and what need more direct, or more solemn engaging themselves to him? — But our Baptism is only a Security during our *Minority* or infant State, and till we are capable of acting for our selves. 'Tis only an Entrance into the Christian State, and Obligation laid upon us; a mark of Distinction and Covenant-Relation to Believers Seed. It was another's Act and Deed for us, but will not serve without any of our own, when we become capable of it. Perhaps if it had been left to your own *Care*, it would have been neglected too, and never done at all. How many

Sect. III. Instances are there of Persons not baptized in their Infant State, who live to Years of Discretion and to old Age, in the neglect of it; who live and die unbaptized. And your Baptism certainly obliges to something farther; to renew your Covenant with God in your own Person: For 'tis a giving up your Names to God, and, like Circumcision, makes you a *Debtor to the whole Law*, of which 'tis a Sign and Seal; and is so far from a reasonable Excuse, that 'tis a strong Obligation upon you. Yea and you virtually disown and renounce your Baptism by habitual Neglect, and refusing to recognize it at the Lord's Table.

Gal. v. 3.

Besides your *Profession* of Religion is either true or false, and you are real in it or not. If you are not; then you are no *Christians* in God's account, but *Hypocrites* in all you do. Your Religion is only outward Appearance and an empty Name.

Name. You tread a *Stage* when Sect. III.
you come to *Church*; appear in
Disguise, and only act a Part.
This is most hateful and pro-
voking Guilt, and instead of wor-
shipping and honouring him in
the Solemnities of Religion, to
mock and affront him, and treat
the living God like an Idol. But
if you are real in the Profession you
make; you are obliged by it to
come to the Lord's Table. For
why do you attend upon any other
Ordinance of Worship, and per-
form any other Duty of Religion?
What is the Principle and Motive
of your Obedience, and your End
and View in it? If it is only Edu-
cation and Custom, or mere Form
and Compliance with others; then
you would do any thing else, if
These had been otherwise, and for
the same reason been Pagans or Pa-
gists, if your Lot had been cast a-
mong them. But if it is out of Re-
verence to God, and Regard to his


 Sect. III. Authority, and with a design of
 spiritual Profit and Advantage;
 then why not this as well as that?
 Why should one be neglected any
 more than another, when there is
 the same Reason common to all?
Whosoever shall keep the whole Law,
and yet offend in one Point, is guilty
of all: i. e. in the Principle, tho
not the Act; for he keeps none
aright, and is liable to the whole
Punishment of the Law.

Jam. ii.
 20.

Again; some pretend, *Many o-*
thers neglect it as well as we, who
are good Christians, and we have
reason to believe better than our
selves. Those of a longer standing
 in the Christian Profession, and of
 more Knowledg and Experience,
 satisfy themselves with Personal
 Surrender to God, and attending
 upon the other Ordinances of the
 Gospel-Worship; and why may not
 we?—I answer; 'Tis very sad
 there is so much occasion for this
 Pretence; That so many who make

Personal and Sacramental.

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Sect. III.

a credible Profession of Religion, and would be readily admitted to the Lord's Table, live in the stated Neglect of it. And elder and more experienced Christians should consider what handle they give to younger and careless Persons, and what countenance to their Neglect. And yet you shall find very few will undertake to justify their Neglect, or so much as pretend they are in the right. They are generally convinced that 'tis their Duty, and if you press it home, will be ready to own it; tho they put off present Attendance, and make some Excuse for themselves. However, the Examples of others, tho Good Men, is no Rule, especially against a plain Precept: a general Example only shews a general Corruption, but don't amount to a sufficient Reason. Indeed the generality are most like to be in the wrong, and 'tis rather a Reason the other way. And *who* do you think

Sect. III. think most in the right, and most fit to be imitated; they who come to the Lord's-Table, or they who neglect it: that is, the careless and negligent Christian, or the humble and obedient one? And if you will be guided by others Example, why not the Examples of the best; of those who are most eminent for Goodness, make the greatest Conscience of their ways, and walk most closely with God? After all, other Mens Neglect will not lessen your Guilt, or lighten your Punishment at last. It will be no Plea in your Defence, or Al- lay of Misery, to have many Part- ners and Companions in it; but the more heighten and aggravate it, and minister to mutual Reproach and everlasting Shame.

Again; others say, we are deeply engaged in other Affairs, and taken up with the World. We have many Cares and Businesses upon our hands; Matters of moment

to our present Interest, and necessary for the Support of those who depend upon us. We cannot get leisure for due Preparation and serious Attendance. They are like *Martha, Cumberd with much serving, and careful and troubled about many Things.* Or those who were invited to the Gospel-Feast, who drew all their Excuses from the Cares of Life, and the Business and Pleasures of the World. — But why are you so involved in the World? Whose Fault is that, that you are so deeply engaged? Had you not much better retrench your Affairs, and reduce them to a narrower Compass? If that it self is a Fault, how unfit is it to be made an Excuse? Can one Fault excuse another? Besides, how unreasonably is this pretended? If God prosper your Affairs, and increase your Store; if he extend your Interests in the World, and you have greater Business and Concerns than others; shall

Sect. III.

Luk. x. 40.

41.

Luk. xiv. ;

19.

Sect. III. shall the Bounty of God to you, be a hindrance of your Duty to him; and that be made a pretence for Neglect, which should be a Motive to more careful Regards? *Do you thus requite the Lord?* Should not those in a better Circumstance of Life, in all reason be more at liberty for the Service of God, as they are the more engaged to it?

And what *greater* Business have you to mind, or which deserves more diligent Care? What are those mighty Affairs which wholly engross, and take you up; or indispole and unfit you for it? What is all this World, in a just Estimate of Things, to the Covenant-Favour of a reconciled God; or all the Enjoyments of Life, to an Opportunity of spiritual Converse and Communion with him? What are outward Conveniences and Accommodations, or worldly Greatness and Increase, to a flourishing State of Soul, and joyful Hopes of Hea-

ven?

ven? And after all, the Cares of *sect. III.*
the World, and the Business of Life
are consistent with a due Regard to
God. You may attend all the
reasonable Business of Life, and not
neglect the Duty you owe to God.
Don't you see some others, who go
thro much Business, and manage
great Affairs, by timely Forecast,
and a little Discretion; find leisure
to attend their Souls, and make
conscience of the most solemn
Worship? A due Attendance on
God in the ways of his Appoint-
ments would be rather a Help in
your worldly Affairs, and serve to
guide and direct you in the success-
ful Management of them; preserve
you from the Snares which attend
them; give a more comfortable
Relish to the Enjoyment; and
bring a more abundant Blessing up-
on them. And where unavoidable
Business, and necessary Cares of
Life, allow less Leisure, less Prepa-
ration will suffice. A good Man
will

Sect. III. will find time for a little Retirement, in the greatest Straits; or mingle serious Thoughts with worldly Business: and a conscientious Performance of daily Duty, and an habitual Seriousness of Heart, will fit him for the Lord's Table, in such a Circumstance, with very little *formal* Preparation.

Finally; others pretend, 'tis time enough *hereafter*, when we grow old, and arrive to Years of more Experience and Discretion. I don't design to neglect it always, but only wait for a *more convenient Season*. I own the Duty, and purpose to come to it; but there is no necessity of present Attendance, or doing it just now.—But there is no sufficient Reason for any delay: For either you are convinced 'tis your Duty, or you are not; that 'tis fit to be done some time or other, or that 'tis not. If you think it is not, why do you talk of doing it hereafter, and purpose to

take

take another time ; and not rather Sect. III.
cast of all Thoughts off it, and
never trouble your selves any more
about it? But if indeed you are
convinced, and judg it ought to
be done; why not now? Why
should you make any manner of
Delay? Is it not now your Duty
as much as ever it will be? Don't
all the Reasons for it, conclude for
the *present* doing of it, and stand in
full force, as much as they will
do hereafter? The same divine
Command, the same Benefits and
Advantages, &c. And Delays are
dangerous, as well as unreasonable:
For by long Neglects Men grow
more careleis and forgetful of Du-
ty; as well as more hardened and
secure in Sin. The same pretence
for present Neglects will grow up-
on you by Time, and appear with
greater Strength and Advantage.
And I dare undertake, if you never
come till you have no pretence left
to the contrary, while there is any

Deceit-

Seet. III. *Deceitfulness* in the Heart of Man, or *Subtilty* left in the Devil, you shall never want a pretence.

Besides, In every matter of any consequence, 'tis certain the sooner the better; and 'tis always best to begin betimes. It will be most pleasing to God, and highly acceptable to him: we have many Intimations to this purpose in the Scripture. *I remember the Love of thy Espousals, and the Kindness of thy Youth. My Soul desires the first ripe Fruit.* Divine Wisdom is introduced saying: *I love them who love me, and they who seek me early shall find me.* The Apostle John was the Disciple whom Jesus loved, probably because he was the youngest of them, as well as of the sweetest natural Temper; and he loved the young Man in the Gospel, who came to enquire after eternal Life. A young Joseph and Josiah, a young Obadiab and Timothy; are mentioned

Jer. ii. 2.

Micah vii.
1.Prov. viii.
17.

with

with peculiar marks of Favour. Early Votaries at his Altar are the most pleasing Sacrifice. When we consecrate the Vigour of our Youth, and the Flower of our Age to him, 'tis highly honourable to his Interest, and a powerful Recommendation to others. And 'tis more beneficial to your selves: For you secure a clearer Evidence of your own Integrity; lay a Foundation for early Acquaintance with God, and greater Improvement in Grace; of more Experience in the Christian Life, and greater Furniture for Usefulness, and growing Ripeness for Glory. And who would not be desirous of the peculiar Favour of Christ, and so high and singular Advantages?

(2.) I shall briefly consider the *Scruples* of the Fearful: the Doubts and Objections which arise in the Minds of weak and humble Christians, and those who are more subject to Discouragement and Fear.

Per-

Seet. III. Perhaps some may stumble at the
 ~~~~~ Threshold, and question, whether  
 'tis a *standing* Appointment under  
 the Gospel, and not to be taken in  
 a *spiritual* Sense. There have been  
 some artful Insinuations industri-  
 ously spread abroad, and put into  
 Peoples hands, to stagger their  
 Faith, and weaken their Regards to  
 this holy Ordinance. We may  
 } say of such Persons as the Apostle  
 does of *Hymeneus* and *Phyletus*, and  
 upon much the same Reason; *Who*  
 2 Tim. ii. *concerning the Truth have erred, say-*  
 17, 18. *ing the Resurrection is past already*  
*and overthrow the Faith of some.*  
*Nevertheless the Foundation of God*  
*standeth sure.* And tho I would  
 not entangle a Practical Discourse  
 with matters of Controversy, yet  
 in a Thing which so nearly affects  
 our Practice, I think it will not  
 be improper to represent the Sug-  
 gestions, and set the matter to  
 rights in a few Words.

The Substance of the Pretence Sect. III.

is this : \* That the whole Action of the Lord's Supper with the Apostles, was only the *Jewish* Passover, and there was no Institution of another Ordinance in the close of it, and to succeed in the room of it : That it was to be only a Remembrance of him in his short absence, till his coming to them again after his Resurrection : That there is no intimation that the Apostles should use this Rite afterwards ; and St. Paul's account to the *Corinthians* is only an Historical Relation of what our Lord did with his Disciples in the last Passover. That it was indulged to them for a while, who could not presently be brought off from the *Jewish* Rites, and was the Table of the Lord to them who had Faith in it : But there is no absolute Command or Injunction to

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\* Dissertation concerning the Lord's Supper ; in two Parts. Printed 1708. And R. Barclay's Apology, Prop. 13.



Sect. III. confirm the positive use of it, and perpetuate it to the World's end. That *till he come*, signifies only his Appearance after his Resurrection, and is never used of a final Appearance, or coming at the end of the World: That now he is spiritually present with us, it can be only understood in a spiritual sense, like Christ's *Supping with us and with him*; i. e. of an internal, real spiritual feeding on him by Faith.

I answer; Here are many Things roundly asserted, and with a great Assurance, without sufficient Evidence, and upon very plain Mistake. There seems a plain Distinction between the last *Passover*, and the *Lord's Supper*; for tho' 'tis reasonable to suppose from Matthew's Account, that 'twas the same Bread and Wine used in the *Passover*, yet it was used to another purpose, and had a new *Form* given it. Our Lord takes of the Bread and Wine of the *Passover*, and uses some

the same Expressions, but to quite Sect. III.  
different Purpose and End. For  
he says upon breaking the Bread  
*This is my Body*: and upon taking  
the Cup, *This is my Blood of the* Mat. xxvi.  
*New Testament, which is shed for ma-* 26, 28.  
*ny, for the Remission of Sins*: i. e.  
The Memorial of my Body and  
and Blood, and the Sacrifice I am  
about to offer. Agreeable to which,  
the Apostle says; *The Cup of Bles-*  
*sing which we bless, is it not the Com-* I Cor. x.  
*munion of the Blood of Christ? and* 16.  
*the Bread which we break, is it not*  
*the Communion of the Body of Christ?*  
What was this to the Jewish Pass-  
over, which was a Memorial of their  
and Deliverance from Egypt, and only  
is read a Type of spiritual Blessings? This  
was clearly another Thing, and de-  
signed to another Purpose and Use;  
to be a standing Memorial of Christ  
our Passover sacrificed for us, and of  
the New Covenant in his Blood. And  
it plainly appears from Luke's Ac- Luk. xxii.  
count to have been distinct from the 19.  
Pas-

Sect. III. Passover, and after it was finished

Here was a stamp of Authority, as much as the Example and Command of Christ could give it. And we find the Apostles themselves observed it as a divine Institution, not only after our Lord's Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension to Heaven, as in *Acts 2.* but after the Descent of the Holy Ghost, and largest Effusions of spiritual and miraculous Gifts, and when he was most eminently present with them in that sense: as in the 20th of *Acts.*

The Apostle *Paul* evidently declares a divine Appointment to the *Corinthians*, and not merely relates a Fact; for he uses the same Form of Expression concerning it, as he does of the great Articles of the Christian Doctrine, which he received of the Lord, and delivered to them, to be believed and obeyed. He corrects the Abuse and Corruption among them, directs in the right manner of Attendance, and

1 Cor. xv.

3.

- xi. 22,

28, 30.

related

relates the Punishment which be- Sect. III.  
fel the unworthy Receivers. Be-  
sides, the *Corinthians* were not  
*Jews* but *Greeks*, who had no Inclination, but great Aversion to the  
*Jewish* Rites: nor is there the least  
Intimation of any Indulgence to  
them for the present, or laying it  
aside afterwards, when they grew  
too fond of it, and it occasioned  
differences among them; as he did  
in the Case of Circumcision. And  
'tis with a degree of Ignorance, equal  
at least to the Confidence with  
which 'tis asserted; That the Ex-  
pression, *till he come*, don't point out  
the time of its Continuance, and is  
never used of his final Appearance:  
when 'tis the usual sense of it even in  
the Evangelist; *What shall be the sign* Mat. xxiv.  
*of thy Coming, and of the end of the* 3.  
*World?* And, *So shall also the Coming* Ver. 27.  
*of the Son of Man be.* The Apo-  
stle often speaks of it in this sense:  
That we may have Confidence, and  
not be ashamed before him at his Com- I Joh. ii.  
ing. And the Church breathes out 25.  
H her

Sect. III. her Desires in this Form of Expression: *Even so come Lord Jesus.* It plainly seems parallel to the other Phrase in the Institution of Baptism:

Rev. xii.  
20.

Mat. xxviii.  
20.

*Always unto the End of the World.* And certainly they had need to remember him after his Resurrection, and in his glorified State, as well as just while he lay in the Grave.

Nor is the grand Pretence less unreasonable; as if the use of any sensible Signs were inconsistent with spiritual Worship, and there were no need of any outward Representations to assist our Faith, and affect our Hearts. We must *discern the Lord's Body* indeed, and feed upon him by Faith: but the Elements of Bread and Wine, broken and poured forth; taken by us, and eat and drunk; are proper to signify the Crucifixion of Christ, and our Participation of him, to our very Senses, and are a gracious Condescension to them. The Lord Jesus Christ, is *evidently set forth*

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in this holy Ordinance, *crucified* sect. III.  
*before our Eyes*: and good Men of-  
 ten find the most enlarged Liberty  
 and exalted Frame of Heart; the  
 warmest and most lively Exercise  
 of every Grace, in a serious Atten-  
 dance on it. It seems a very wise  
 and gracious Appointment, and  
 very proper under the Influence of  
 a divine Blessing, to promote a spi-  
 ritual Good: So that this is really  
 to call in question the Wisdom and  
 Kindness, as well as the Autho-  
 rity of the Redeemer; who has  
 made so sparing a Use of outward  
 Signs under the Gospel, and so ad-  
 mirably adapted them to their End.  
 But to leave this, and proceed:

Others say, I am *not fit* for it, or  
 clear in my Right to it; that I  
 am one who ought to come, or  
 may lawfully come: For I doubt  
 whether I am *Sincere*, and in a state  
 of Grace; at least whether I am  
 duly *prepared* and in a suitable  
 Frame; whether I have on the

**Sect. III. Wedding-Garment,** and should be a welcome Guest, and a worthy Communicant. — But why do you fear you are not Sincere? What is the Ground of the Doubt? Examine the matter a little distinctly. Let me say to you, as our Lord did to *Peter*; *Wherefore dost thou doubt, O thou of little Faith?* Perhaps you doubt upon insufficient Reasons, and without a just Cause: As because of the weakness of your Faith, and want of lively Exercise and Experience; or the stirrings of Corruption, and frequent rising of rebellious Motions: which may argue indeed a lower degree of Grace, tho' not a total Absence; and may be a just Reason of Humiliation, when 'tis not of Discouragement. Are you not unfeignedly willing to be the Lord's, and to give your selves to him entire and unreserved; to believe in the Lord Jesus with all your Heart; have respect to all his Commands; and hate every false way?

Mat. xiv.

31.

Are

Are not the Remains of Sin the <sup>Sect. III.</sup> greatest Burden, and perfect Purity your Ambition and Aim? Can you deny or disown this? And then do you think there is no Evil in unreasonable Doubts of your good Estate, as well as in rash and presumptuous Hopes? Don't you dishonour God by denying his Grace, and injure and discourage your own Souls?

And what *Fitness* do you think is necessary? Perhaps you think more required than really is so. 'Tis not a Worthiness of *Desert*: for so none are worthy. The best Men, in this sense, are unworthy of the meanest Mercy, and the common Enjoyments of their Lives; of the Crumbs which fall from their *own* Table, as well as the rich Provision of *His*. *I am not worthy of the least of all the Mercys and of all the Truth, which thou hast shewed to thy Servant.* <sup>Gen. xxxii. 10.</sup> 'Tis only a Meetness and *Suitable-*

Sect. III.

ness to it, which is required; that there be something answerable in us to the Nature and Design of it. And so the best Preparation for the Lord's Supper, and surest Title to it, is a Heart sincerely devoted to God, in the Exercise of Faith, and Love and Repentance, and Thankfulness: A Heart habitually willing in actual Exercise; resigning and engaging it self to God. And a due Sense of great Unworthiness is a proper Exercise of an upright Soul, and a great part of our Preparation and Meetness for it. We are the more suited to it by a humble Sense of Sin, and kindly Acknowledgments of Soul. The Publican went away *rather justified*, Luk. xviii. who cries out, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*. And the Prodigal 13. was not the less welcome, when he Luk. xv. says, *I am no more worthy to be called thy Son*. The best of Men are un- 19. prepared in some degree, and not so fit as they should be: a Sincere and

*Personal and Sacramental.*

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and Diligent Soul has often reason *Sect. III.*  
to make the humble Supplication  
for himself, which *Hezekiah* made  
for the People who eat the Pass-  
over otherwise than it was written;  
The good Lord pardon every one *2 Chron.*  
who prepares his Heart to seek God, *xxx. 19, 20.*  
the Lord God of his Fathers, tho he be  
not cleansed according to the Purifi-  
cation of the Sanctuary. A Defect in  
actual Preparation is not a sufficient  
Reason for Omission or Neglect;  
and this holy Ordinance is a proper  
means to promote our Preparation,  
and improve the Frame and Temper  
of our Minds. After all; If in-  
deed you are not fit to come to the  
Lord's Table, how are you fit to  
die? Or fit to pray? You take  
upon you to *speake* unto the Lord,  
and you must quickly *appear* before  
him; that which will fit you for  
One of these, will fit you for the  
Other. And dare you continue in  
such a state, in which you are unfit  
to leave the World at last, and for



Sect. III. the acceptable Performance of any  
 other Duty as well as this?

Further; Others are often heard to say, 'Tis a very solemn Thing, and I am afraid to venture: I dread the Consequence of *unworthy* Receiving; for *he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* I must come under stricter Ties to God than ever; and if thro the Weakness and Deceitfulness of Heart, or the Power of surrounding Snares, I should break my Covenant with God, I should involve my self in greater Guilt: and had I not better never come under so sacred an Engagement, than not be faithful to it, and be only the worse for it? — I answer; The *eating and drinking unworthily*, which the Apostle condemns, was not the Weakness and Defects of a sincere and humble Soul, but gross Wickedness and Abuse; great Irregularity, Uncharitableness, and Irreverence:

In

Personal and Sacramental.

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In eating every one taketh before another his own Supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunk: and they did not discern the Lord's Body; or distinguish Sacramental Bread from the common Bread of a Feast. For this God inflicted great temporal Judgments upon them. For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. And they were chastened of the Lord. But what is this to your Case, who are not guilty of their Disorders? Should you heighten and extend the sense of the Judgment, who fall so much short of the Nature of the Offence? Or fear a higher Punishment than was inflicted on them, who are not Partakers of their heinous Sin?

And what necessity is there of eating and drinking unworthily, or breaking your Covenant with God? Why mayn't you come duly prepared, and receive the saving Advantage? 'Tis not because 'tis impossible to be done; for then none

H 5

would,

Sect. III.

I Cor. xi.

21.

Ver. 29.

Ver. 30.

Ver. 32.

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Sect. III. *Self-Dedication,*  
would ever be able to do it, and  
many serious Christians are faithful  
to their Covenant-Engagements.  
'Tis not because of the Difficulty  
of doing it, and your own Weak-  
ness and Insufficiency of your selves:  
For his *Grace is sufficient*, and he is  
*able to preserve us and keep us from*  
*falling*. And tho 'tis a solemn En-  
gagement to God, 'tis an Engage-  
ment to *Sincerity*, not to Perfec-  
tion; and nothing is properly a  
breaking a Covenant, but Insincer-  
ity and Unfaithfulness. And are you  
not already under strict Engage-  
ments to that? In reality, you are  
not more at liberty to be Careless  
and Secure, tho you refuse to come;  
nor bound to any Instance of new  
Duty, when you do. 'Tis rather a  
Renewal of former Engagements,  
and adding farther strength to them,  
than coming under any which we  
were not under before. And hum-  
ble *Fear* is very useful to prevent  
our falling, and make us Watchful

and

*Personal and Sacramental.*

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and Dependent, when the Presump- Sect. III.  
tuous and Secure are more easily  
betrayed, and likely to be forsaken.

The humble Disciples who were afraid of themselves, did not fall so foully as *Peter* did, who was Confident of standing. We need the help of all Engagements to hold us fast to God, and fix our wavering and unsteddy Minds, and 'tis well if all will do. And why should we fear the Evil which attends Unfaithfulness, without regarding the Grace and Helps afforded to be faithful, and the many Benefits of a faithful Attendance?

Besides, have you no dread of the other *Extreme*, or Fear of Neglecting it? Is not that a great Unworthiness too; not to communicate at all, as well as to do it in an unsuitable Manner? This is perhaps the only instance of so unaccountable a Conjunction, as Reverence and Neglect; for Men to shew their respect to a Duty by turn-

Sect. III turning their backs upon it, and out of the great Regard they have to it, to let it alone. Does all the Danger lie on one side? Will not the guilty Neglect expose to the divine Displeasure, and forfeit the Advantages of a gracious Appointment? Don't you break solemn Engagements to God under which you stand already? And have you no dread of the Evil on the other side; or Apprehension of Loss to your Selves, and Anger of God, by your Disobedience? This might serve for a Pretence in any other Case as well as this, and be used to excuse away all the Duty we owe to God; for there is danger in praying unworthily, and hearing the Word, &c. as well as in receiving unworthily: but who is so weak or perverse, to make that a Reason of Neglect, and not rather of the greater Care?

Once more; 'Tis said by some, But is it *Necessary*? May we not be

*Safe*



Safe without it? Will not every true Believer in Jesus be accepted of God, and eternally saved, tho he never come to the Lord's Table?——But what if it is not absolutely necessary to the Safety and Salvation of the Soul; and may be dispensed with in some supposable Cases; as the want of Opportunity, or present Incapacity, thro bodily Indispositions, or unavoidable Darkness and Fear: may there not be sufficient Reason for your Attendance for all that? Will you do nothing in Religion, but what is just absolutely necessary to Salvation? Then you may neglect many other Duties you now perform upon the same pretence; as Christian Conference, Family Worship, and Singing the Praises of God, &c. I am sure at this rate we act unequally towards our Bodies and Souls; the Concerns of this World and the other. Who is satisfied with the mere Necessaries

Sect. III. *Riches of Life, and don't desire Convenience and Accommodation? Don't Men labour for Improvement and Increase in all the several ways of Life, and neglect their Souls, and hazard Heaven to gain the World? Don't they plainly aim at greater Estates, and aspire after higher Honours? Who almost is content with his present State, or willing to say, 'tis enough? Shall we be Profuse and Boundless in our Desires of other Attainments, and so unreasonably Thrifty and Contracted here? Have we no Greatness and Ambition of Soul in seeking the true Riches, and a Treasure in Heaven?*

'Tis well for the Professors of this degenerate Age, that we can't say 'tis absolutely necessary, when so great Numbers every where live in the habitual Neglect of it, and so small a part of most Congregations come to it, who attend upon every other Branch of the Christian Worship.

ship. They part at the Lord's Table, which is the means of their nearer Union to one another, and especially designed for the *Communion of Saints*. And yet there is a great Difference to be made between simple *Neglect*, and proper *Contempt*; between present abstaining for special Reasons, tho faulty and defective; and refusing to come at all, especially under Convictions of Duty, and fair Opportunity and Call. Tho the former may stand with Sincerity and Acceptance, the latter, in the Judgment of all Divines, cannot; but affects our State, and hazards Salvation it self. Contemptus damnatus.

But if it is not absolutely necessary to Salvation, 'tis *highly* necessary to some other purposes of great Importance. 'Tis necessary to clear up the Evidence of your *Sincerity*, and give you a comfortable sense of it: for what is Sincerity, but Integrity and Entireness of Heart in Self-surrender and Subjection to God?

Sect. II. God? The wilful Neglect of any one Appointment of the divine Will, is a Challenge to your Sincerity, and Ground of Suspicion and Fear. And 'tis necessary to the *Peace* and *Strength* of your Souls; tho' not to the Being of a Christian, yet to the Well-being and flourishing State of his Soul. For the Lord's Supper is especially intended for more lively Enlargements of Heart, and abundant Communication of divine Influence; and the Neglect of it must needs weaken your Souls, and abate your spiritual Joy. Besides, 'tis necessary to keep up Church-Society and *Communion*, and preserve the great Badg of visible Distinction between the Church and World. If this Humour generally obtained among professed Christians, it would naturally tend to break up Christian Societies, and weaken the Bonds of their Union and Friendship to one another.

And

And is not this necessity enough Sect. IV.  
to engage a serious Christian, who  
is heartily concerned for his Soul's  
Prosperity, and desirous of higher  
Attainments in the Christian Life;  
or bears a due Tenderneſs and Re-  
gard to the Kingdom and Interest  
of the Redeemer in the World; to  
come to the Lord's Table, and be  
found in a constant Attendance  
upon it?

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S E C T. IV.

I SHALL conclude all with a  
few words of Advice, with re-  
lation to Sacramental Covenanting  
with God.

1. Be well *instructed* in the Chris-  
tian Doctrine. The *Principles of*  
*the Doctrine of Christ*, or great  
Articles of necessary Truth, lie in  
a narrow Compass, and are easily  
understood by an ordinary Capa-  
city, with a little Diligence and  
Care; as easily at least, as we at-  
tain



Sect. IV. *rain to human Learning, and the Knowledge of Arts: We may sooner gain the Knowledge of Religion, than acquire a Science, or learn a Trade: and who makes that a Difficulty, tho' 'tis a mere Entertainment of Mind, or Labouring for the Meat which perisheth?*

Get needful Knowledge, and improve your spiritual Advantages; the singular Felicity of a religious Education; the daily Use of the Holy Scriptures in your hands; the frequent Opportunities of public Instruction; and the many private Helps by judicious Books, and conversing with the more Experienced. Endeavour to know him

Joh. xvii. 3. *who is the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent: To know God in Christ, administering his Kingdom thro the Mediator; and*

1 Cor. ii. 2. *to know Jesus Christ, and him crucified: In all his Offices and Performances for our Recovery, as well as the Dignity and Glory of*

his Person: To know the Gospel-*Señ. IV.*  
*Covenant*, or method of divine Dis-  
 pensations, and have a distinct view  
 in your Minds of the great Arti-  
 cles of Christian Duty, and the  
 great Privileges and Blessings secu-  
 red. The knowledg of the Chris-  
 tian Principles is a good Prepara-  
 tion, and absolutely necessary to a  
 regular Admittance, and due At-  
 tendance on the Lord's Supper:  
 For we must *discern the Lord's Body*,  
 which is there represented; and  
 understand the *New Covenant*, which  
 is sealed and confirmed.

2. Look well to the *Sincerity* of  
 the Heart, or unfeigned Willingness  
 to be the Lord's. As'tis a Cove-  
 nant-Transaction with God, the  
 grand Requisite is Sincerity, and the  
 Sum of all our Preparation. This  
 is of the utmost consequence to  
 be considered, and the clearest and  
 shortest way; for it lies directly,  
 and is all comprehended in this  
 single Point. If you are heartily  
 willing

Sect. IV. willing to give up your selves to the Lord, and consent to his gracious Covenant; fully determined for God in the Judgment of your Souls, and *cleave to him with purpose of Heart*; subject to his Authority so far as you know it, and satisfied with his Disposal; willing to take your Lot with the People of God in all Conditions of Life; and God himself as your *Portion* for ever: then you are fit to come to the Table of the Lord, and ought to do so. And fear not Acceptance with God, and spiritual Profit, if you come but thus prepared.

Acts viii.  
36, 37.

The same Faith which qualifies the Adult for Baptism, qualifies for the Lord's Table; for there is the same common Nature to both. And I may say in this Case, as *Philip* to the Eunuch: when he said, *Here is Water, what hindreth me to be baptized?* *Philip* said, *If thou believest with all thy Heart, thou may'st.* What should hinder a sincere

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sincere Believer from sealing and Sect. IV.  
renewing his Covenant with God? ~~~~~

The Apostle marks out the great  
Qualification for it, *Let us eat the* 1 Cor. v.  
*Feast—with the unleavened Bread of* 8.

*Sincerity of Truth; and expressly*  
*requires, But let a Man examine* 1 Cor. xi.  
*himself, and so let him eat of that* 28.

*Bread, and drink of that Cup: Con-*  
*sider the state of his Soul, and sui-*  
*tableness to this Appointment.*

3. Satisfy your selves of your  
ordinary Course and Walk. How  
do you live? Do you walk in all  
the other Ordinances and Commands  
of the Lord blameless; with Gospel-  
Sincerity, and prevailing Regard  
to God? And walk according to this  
Rule, in your ordinary Course, and  
daily Affairs? Do you make con-  
science of Prayer to God, secret as  
well as Publick; of Reading and  
Hearing the Word of God? &c. Do  
you live in all good Conscience, to-  
wards Others, in the daily Exercise  
of Truth and Justice, and Charity  
in

Sect. IV. in all your Dealings and Affairs of  
 Life? of Purity and Sobriety in  
 the Possession of your selves, and  
 all Enjoyments of Life? And tho  
 there are many Weaknesses and  
 Defects in all you do, and some-  
 times sinful Omissions and Neglects,  
 which are deeply lamented, and  
 heartily opposed; is not the *Drift*  
 of your Life for God, as well as  
 the *Bent* of your Heart, the main  
 Scope, and governing Tendency of  
 all you do? Don't you make his  
 Will the highest Reason, and his  
 Glory the last End, of every de-  
 liberate Action and solemn Under-  
 taking of Life? Do you *live unto*  
*God*? Is your Faith a real living  
 Thing, not an empty Notion, or  
 vain Pretence; but a Principle of  
 divine Life, and which appears in  
 all the genuine Fruits of Holiness  
 and Righteousness; so that you  
 may be truly said *to live by Faith*  
*and walk by Faith*? This is of all  
 others the most sensible Evidence,

and



and surest Proof of our Interest and Seft. IV.  
 Fitness for Covenant-Solemnity, as  
 it was the great Ground of the  
 Apostle's Satisfaction and Joy : *This* 2 Cor. i.  
12.  
*is our rejoicing, the Testimony of our  
 Conscience, that in Simplicity and  
 godly Sincerity, not by fleshly Wis-  
 dom, but by the Grace of God, we  
 have had our Conversation in the  
 World.*

4. When you are thus far pre-  
 pared for it, don't *trifle* with God  
 and your selves, by unreasonable  
*Fears*, or needless *Delays*. Come  
 early to the Lord's Table, if you  
 are convinced 'tis your Duty, and  
 have reason to believe you are fit.  
 Why should you be detained by  
 ungrounded Scruples, or mere Pre-  
 tence?

If you say, When would you  
 have us come to the Lord's Table?  
 At what Age of Life? Would you  
 have Children and inexperienced  
 Youth partake of the greatest Or-  
 dinance of the Gospel, and become  
 Church-

Sect. IV. Church-Members? I answer, there is a great Difference and Diversity in Capacity and Attainments, and perhaps 'tis not possible to fix any time of Life; nor would I have any come rashly and unprepared, whether Young or Old. But in general, when Persons are grown to Years of some Discretion; are capable of knowing the Christian Doctrine, and making a Judgment of themselves; of an understanding Choice of God, and entering into Covenant with him; when they arrive to some reasonable Satisfaction of their own Sincerity, and are fixed and determined in their Course and Walk: I think they may and ought to come to the Lord's Table, be they of what Age they will.

5. Let younger Persons especially be *stirred* up to Emulation by others Example. There is a prevailing Force in a near Example, especially to younger Minds. They

love

love to do what they see others do, Sect. IV.  
 and are easily led to do it. What-  
 soever appears Excellent, or is held  
 in Reputation, is apt to strike their  
 tender Mind, and enflame the Am-  
 bition of their Hearts. We see this  
 in every other Case: you are not  
 willing to be outdone by others  
 in any kind of Excellency, as  
 Knowledg and Wisdom, or Strength  
 and Courage, in a graceful Mien,  
 or mere Civility; and will you so  
 easily suffer others to outstrip you  
 in the greatest Excellence, and the  
 highest Commendation, in your  
 Regards to God, and Care of your  
 own Souls? Don't you see some  
 others in their younger Years, of  
*a tender Heart, and who fear the*  
*Lord from their Youth; who enquire*  
*after Eternal Life, and know the Ho-*  
*ly Scriptures betimes; who before*  
 they enter into the World, or at  
 first setting out in it, begin with  
 God, and are in good earnest in  
 Religion? And should not others

Sect. IV. Example, of the same Standing in  
 the World and Rank of Life, strike  
 the Ambition of your Nature, and  
 raise a holy Emulation; that you  
 may be like those you have reason  
 to believe the best, and not out-  
 shone by any? The Apostle urges  
 this Consideration upon the Jews,  
 when the *Gentiles* were taken into  
 the Christian Church: *But rather*  
*thro their Fall, Salvation is come to*  
*the Gentiles, to provoke them to Jeal-*  
*ousy.* And again; *For I speak to*  
*you Gentiles, if by any means I may*  
*provoke to Emulation them who are*  
*my Flesh, and might save some of*  
*them.* And he stirs up the *Corin-*  
*thians* to Charity by this Conside-  
 ration: *I speak not by Command,*  
*but by Occasion of the Forwardness*  
*of others, and to prove the Sincerity*  
*of your Love.* And mentions it to  
 their Praise, that they came behind  
 in no Gift: were not inferior to  
 others in spiritual Attainments.

Besides;

Besides; if you descend from re-  
 Sect. IV.  
 ligious Parents, God must be con-  
 sidered as your *Fathers God*: They  
 stood related to him in a sealed Co-  
 venant, and secured an Entail of  
 Blessings upon their Seed. This is  
 often mentioned in the Old Testa-  
 ment as a mark of the highest Ho-  
 nour, and Motive of Regard: so  
*David* tells *Solomon*; *And thou So-* 2 Chron.  
*lomon my Son, know thou the God* xxviii. 9.  
*of thy Fathers*: And in his Blessing  
 of the People, O Lord God of A- Ch. xxix.  
 braham, Isaac and Israel, *our Fathers,* 18.  
*keep this for ever in the Imagina-*  
*tion of the Thoughts of thy People.*  
 The wise Son of so pious a Father,  
 advises to the same purpose: *Thine* Prov. xxvii.  
*own Friend, and thy Father's Friend,* 10.  
*forsake not*: How much rather thy  
 Father's God, his best Friend?  
 There is a great Endearment in  
 the Expression, and an additional  
 Reason of Regard. 'Twas the  
 highest Honour of pious Ancestors,  
 that they belonged to God, and



Sect. IV. were his Covenant-People. They  
 found him faithful all their days,  
 and left an honourable Testimony  
 of him behind them. Have they  
 never told you in their Lives, or  
 upon their dying Beds; " I have  
 " engaged you to God, and brought  
 " you up in his Fear; if you con-  
 " tinue Faithful to him, my God  
 Gen. i. 24. " shall be your God: I die, but  
 " God will surely be with you, and  
 " bring you out of this Land: I de-  
 " part from you with the hope of  
 " meeting you with Joy, and being  
 " with you for ever: *You shall come*  
 " *to me, tho I shall not return to you* \*?  
 Should you be backward to own  
 your *Fathers* God, and secure the  
 Privilege of such a State? Will  
 you disown the Relation, and cut  
 off the Entail of Covenant-Mercy?

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\* *The Excellent Mr. Joseph Stennett told his Children upon his dying Bed: Know, if you are Good and Religious, my God will be your God. Vid. His Funeral Sermon by Mr. Hodges.*

6. Let

6. Let Elder Persons be admonished who have lived long in the Neglect of it. 'Tis strange to Astonishment, to consider how many Christians grow old under a Profession of Religion in the Neglect of the Lord's Supper. What do Men mean by so strange a Conduct? Will you live and die in the Neglect of it? Do you propose to continue all your days in a Disregard of so plain and merciful an Appointment? Is it not high time to weigh the matter, and come to a point? Have you not delayed long enough already, and may not the *time past* abundantly *suffice*? Can you hope at such an Age of Life, for a long Season of Enjoyment? Don't it concern you to make the utmost haste, to retrieve the lost Opportunities, and make the best of those which remain? Will it not lie with weight upon a dying Bed, create Uneasiness to the departing Spirit, and add to all the Burdens

Sect. IV. of Nature? Are you not treasuring  
 up matter for bitter Repentance  
 or flaming Wrath? Can you hope  
 to have *Confidence, and not be asha-*  
*med before him at his Coming*; or to  
 give up your *Account with Joy, and*  
*not with Grief?*

1 John ii.  
28.

Heb. xiii.

17.

What a Shame is it for an *old*  
*Disciple* never to renew his Cove-  
 nant, and wear the *Badge of Di-*  
*stinction*? Do you hope to come  
 to Heaven, as *Nicodemus* did to  
 Christ, privately and by stealth?  
 To be outdone by so many younger  
 Christians, perhaps your Children  
 and Servants; to see them come to  
 the Lord's Table, while you stay  
 away; and receive the blessed Ad-  
 vantage, which you want, and de-  
 prive your self of! Let every old  
 Neglector of so great a Duty trem-  
 ble at the awful Thought of the  
*foolish Virgins*, who notwithstanding  
 their Assurance and Importu-  
 nity, were *shut out and disowned*:  
 and lest, while you now exclude  
 your

Mat. xxv.

10, 11.

your selves, it should fare with you *Sect. IV.*  
 at last, as it will with the *Jews*,  
 who shall see Abraham, and Isaac, *Luk. xiii.*  
 and Jacob in the Kingdom of Hea-<sup>28.</sup>  
*ven*; and they themselves cast out.  
 You refuse the Invitation to the  
 Lord's Table, what if you should  
 be denied the Blessedness of those  
 who are called to the Marriage-Supper *Rev. xix.*  
 of the Lamb? <sup>9.</sup>

7. As to those who have come  
 to the Lord's Table, but now dis-  
 ase, and discontinue it; or grow  
*careless* and remiss in their Atten-  
 dance; seldom come, and frequent-  
 ly intermit. 'Tis very strange for  
 those who were *once enlightened*,  
*and have tasted the heavenly Gift*;  
 been convinced of their Duty, and  
 experienced the benefit of it; to  
 grow into Carelessness and Disregard.  
 When you have *subscribed with the*  
*Hand to the Lord*, would you re-  
 voke your Consent? and seem to  
 look back, when you have *put your*  
*Hand to the Plough*? Have you  
 ever

Sect. IV. ever found God unfaithful, that you  
 seem willing to leave him, or sit  
 the looser to him? Don't the same  
 Obligations and Reasons, which  
 first brought you to it, continue,  
 and stand in full force for constant  
 Attendance? Don't you need con-  
 tinual Refreshments and Relief?  
 May not one Opportunity prove  
 more Comfortable and Efficacious,  
 if another has not; and be attend-  
 ed with more sensible Enlivenings  
 and Enlargements of Heart, quick-  
 ning Manifestations of divine Fa-  
 vour, and vigorous Exercises of  
 Faith and Love? And should we  
 not be found waiting upon God  
 on every season of Attendance, as  
 well as every Ordinance of his  
 Worship? *Thomas* lost the Oppor-  
 tunity of our Lord's first Appear-  
 ance, by an *occasional* Absence from  
 the rest of the Disciples, and 'tis  
 particularly remarked to his Dis-  
 advantage: *And Thomas, called*  
*Dydimus, was not with them when*  
*Jesus*

John xx.  
 24, 25.



*Jesus came:* This occasioned the Sect. IV. strange Expressions of Unbelief, and made an Apostle of Christ talk like an Infidel. You know not what you lose by a single Neglect, or chosen Absence from a solemn Ordinance. Perhaps it might have been the best opportunity of your Lives.

8. As to those who *do* come to the Table of the Lord, and renew their Covenant there: If you have sincerely given your selves to him in this holy Ordinance, I shall sum up your whole Concern in this single Advice: Often *review* Sacramental Bonds; consider the Relation and Engagements under which you stand to Christ. This would furnish matter of peculiar Thankfulness for so high an Honour and rich a Privilege: *What manner of Love is this, that we should be called the Sons of God!* for Enemies to be reconciled, and Prodigals entertained at their Father's House; how

Seēt. IV. how fit is this to fix a grateful Habit, and raise a kindly Sense of Soul? It would impress the Obligations we are brought under, the deeper upon our Mind, and preserve a more lively Sense of them: *We have sworn and will perform it, that we will keep his righteous Judgments.* Oppose your Covenant-Dedication to all the Solicitations of the Devil, and every Snare of a tempting World. Revive the Sense of Covenant-Bonds, to secure faithful Regards to God, and steddy Adherence to his Interest: Derive Comfort and Support under all the Trials of Life, from the Consideration of your Covenant-Relation to God, and his Covenant-Care of you: Make it the Ground of a lively and joyful Hope of final Perseverance, and the heavenly Glory.

Psal. cxix.  
106.

It would have a mighty Influence upon our whole Christian Course, and be directive of our daily Conduct,

duct, to make now and then a so-Sect. IV.  
lemn Review, and keep a strong  
Impression upon our Minds, of Sa-  
cramental Covenanting with God.  
For as this is the compleatest Sum  
of our Christianity, and compre-  
hends all the Blessings and Duties  
of the Christian State, we should  
find suitable Reliefs in all the Necessi-  
ties of Life, and fetch powerful  
Motives to all suitable Regards:  
It would be a constant Guide and  
Help in the way, and the Pledge  
and Earnest of a blessed and glorious  
End.

F I N I S.





